A Girl from CHINA

(SOUMAY TCHENG)

B. VAN VORST

APR 9 1957

A GIRL FROM CHINA

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(Soumay Tcheng)

BY

B. VAN VORST

Author of
"A Popular History of France"

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FOREWORD

IN JULY, 1925, the first Chinese girl, Soumay Tcheng, passed her examinations at the Sorbonne and received her degree as a lawyer. The scene was historic, marking a date when a woman of the East came as a winning equal into the arena of Occidental learning.

In honor of this event the Dean of the Faculty reserved the largest hall in the University of Paris—bare except for its tapestried walls and vast center table, on one side of which sat the three examiners in red gowns and ermine, on the other Soumay Tcheng—how small she looked!—in a pale blue Chinese dress of crêpe de Chine cut in the latest Shanghai fashion, her cheeks and lips properly rouged, a touch of black about the eyes, and, quite in the style of her western sisters, her hair bobbed.

To pass an examination at the Sorbonne, to receive a *"Doctorat En Droit,"* these are wonderful achievements, but Soumay Tcheng is more remarkable through her personality, because of what she is rather than of what she knows. Her character shows a rare combination of sound in-

telligence, strong will-power, and keen sensibilities.

Born in Canton in the ancestral palace of the Tchengs, one of the oldest Chinese families, she freed herself step by step from the former semi-slavery of the Chinese woman until she reached her present state of complete emancipation. As a child of five she refused to have her feet bound; as a girl of fourteen she declined to marry the stranger to whom her family had affianced her; as a young woman of sixteen, at the risk of her life which she had pledged, she was carrying bombs, deep in the revolutionary activities which transformed the Chinese government from an empire of crumbling temples and old brocades, to a republic still struggling against the handicap of imperialistic tradition, but with the highest aspirations toward fraternal, industrial democracy.

For the last ten years Soumay Tcheng has been the leading spirit among the Chinese students in Paris. Her home in the Latin Quarter has been a center frequented by the humblest workmen and women and by the most eminent Chinese statesmen, scholars, and diplomats as they have visited Paris.

True to the precepts of Confucius, Soumay Tcheng has proved that wisdom and will-power are incomplete forces without the human touch, without the vivifying appeal of tenderness. Her

heart is as deep and as open as her mind, as steady and as unfailing as her will. The interest of her story as she related it to me and as I have transcribed it here, lies in the promise it holds for her Chinese sisters. A nation, to be sure, is no greater than its women, but whatever drawbacks to progress the Chinese women's education may have hitherto presented, Soumay Tcheng's example illuminates the future way.

Is she going to practise law? Not immediately. The State Department has offered her a position on her return to Peking in November. She hopes to go into Parliament, to found a women's party, a women's bank, etc., and at the same time she will continue to collaborate with the young statesmen of China, who patiently, determinedly, are rousing the Chinese to a sense of national unity, inspiring an old people with a new and modern spirit.

A GIRL FROM CHINA

(Soumay Tcheng)

A GIRL FROM CHINA

CHAPTER I

Our Palace in Canton

I WAS born in an old house which had been built by my father's father, in Canton. We belonged to the aristocracy of China, which is composed of one hundred families. The constant recurrence of the names Lee, Cheng, Wang, Woo, Hoo, etc., is explained by this fact that we have narrowed our genealogies down to a cycle. Yet, paradoxical as it may seem, we are the most democratic people in the world, as I shall endeavour to make clear, and, at the same time, there are certain prejudices still extant among us which must astonish Americans.

In my grandfather's days, for example, there was a general contempt for any money which was not inherited. Grandfather had been brought up in the belief that a mandarin, such as his own father, who had served his country faithfully, ought not to acquire a fortune. This theory, however, seemed absurd to him. He was full of energy, and he had the sort of creative ability which is bound to make money. His

dream was to rebuild the city of Hong Kong. The day he ventured to inform his father of this rather pretentious project he was told that he could thereafter look out for himself, that no further allowance would be granted him from the abundant patrimony of his indignant parent. He managed to get on without it. He was a born financier. He had the instinct and the audacity necessary to undertake any venture. There are whole quarters of Hong Kong which owe their existence to his initiative. It was he who built the palace in which I was born and brought up, and which, even today, is an object of interest to all foreigners who visit Canton.

In true Chinese fashion we were a very large family under the parental roof; with grandmother, my mother with her children, her brothers and sisters, the cousins, the uncles and aunts, we numbered about sixty people in all, without counting the servants, who amounted to another forty.

To reach the entrance of our house you cross first a large courtyard surrounded by grey stone walls, and then a garden full of trees and flowers and sweet-scented shrubs, always in bloom, for the mildness of the air in Canton is like a perpetual springtime. The four seasons with us are noticeable only because of the changes in colour and perfume—the leaves never fall, winter is unknown.

The main entrance of the house, at the top of a flight of stone steps, between two columns, is at the other side of the garden. Before the door there is a screen in carved wood. This is one of the many treasures of our household. My grandfather was particularly proud of this screen; he had the wood brought from a forest where every tree is at least a hundred years old, and he himself chose the subjects which he wished to have cut into this splendid material, and then gilded. They relate episodes of our national history. Back of this screen there is a large vestibule where the men-servants, when we come in from an outing, draw up our sedan-chairs. It is only very recently that people in Canton have begun to go about on foot, or in carriages. In my childhood well-to-do families went out only in sedan-chairs.

But to continue with the visit of the house: When you have crossed the vestibule, you find yourself in another courtyard which is like the scenery of some sylvan play: there are grottoes, artificial rocks, miniature mountains, old stone bridges, all reflected in a tiny lake where the lotus flowers grow high in summer-time. Beyond this glimpse into fairyland, another staircase leads into an immense hall paved in marble. This is the reception-room, with its altar, where the family marriages and births and all religious festivities are celebrated. Only on such exceptional

occasions have the women of the family a right to penetrate into this almost unused and very beautiful part of the house. On the walls, in the decorative Chinese characters, the story of our ancestors is written out in full.

Twice a year, during his lifetime, my grandfather used to invite all the poor of Canton to a banquet in this hall. He presented them with clothes, with wood enough for all their needs, and with everything that might keep them from want. As a recognition for such generosity the poor people of the town begged the Emperor to show some public favour to their benefactor. So the sovereign, with his own hand, traced the four characters which, translated into English, mean: "Tcheng Yao, a philanthropist who loves to give."

The panel on which these words are transcribed occupies the place of honour in the big hall; it stands there as the summing up, or culmination, of all the acts of our ancestors, direct and indirect, for generations, those who had given us birth, and those whose lineage we shall transmit.

A long gallery next to this hall separates into two distinct parts the quarters occupied by the men of the family, and those where the women of the household live. My two brothers ate, slept, and studied, quite apart from my sister and myself. They came to join us during recreation

hours, when all the cousins, boys and girls, played together for a time.

I was the youngest of the family. I hardly ever left my mother's side.

CHAPTER II

My First Dreams of Freedom

AT the time of which I am writing, when I was a little child, my mother was about twenty-five years old. We were the closest possible friends.

As for the other members of the family—my grandmother and my uncles especially—they did not attract me. I could not care for them much because I felt they did not understand me. I was always doing things for which they felt called upon to scold me. I did not have patience enough to sit quietly, like my little cousins, and be taught how to embroider. I liked to run around the gardens and climb trees with the boys. I was quite an expert at marbles, and could spin a top better than my brothers. Another game I liked was one totally unknown in the women's quarters; we played it with the big pieces of Chinese money, trying to see how far we could roll them along the ground.

One day when I was busy with one of my boy cousins building a mud house, my uncle discovered me and punished me severely. He struck me. His anger made me determined that I would

not yield to him. Seeing my obstinacy, he dragged me off to my mother. He begged her to chastise me in a manner befitting such misdemeanours.

As soon as I was alone with my beloved mother, my dear, great friend, I felt that I could speak out my heart.

"Why," I said to her, "do they want to prevent me from building mud houses? It's such fun! Where's the harm?"

My mother answered with a slight tone of reproach:

"Girls are meant to be very gentle, quiet little people. They must learn to obey."

Convinced that I had done nothing wrong, I answered in all sincerity:

"If I am not allowed to go and play with the boys in the garden, then I shall have to stay in the house with the servants. What will they teach me? I shall see them helping themselves to the food, and I shall hear them repeating all the gossip."

My mother did not scold me. I remember now the tenderness in her eyes as she looked at me. She was displeased with me for my disobedience, but she quite understood my reasons as I gave them to her.

I was only about six years old at this time, and as I was often the companion of my mother, I now became, in a way, her confidante. She was constantly alone. My father, who was then about

thirty, remained absent for months at a time. Indeed, he lived almost entirely in Peking, quite as though he had forgotten us all in the house at Canton.

Toward the end of the day my mother used to like to lie down to rest on the couch in her own little favourite parlour. It was a delightful room into which it gave me the greatest joy to be admitted. The walls were covered with rare embroideries. The dark teakwood of which the furniture was made offered a striking contrast with the brilliant colours of the brocades in the panels of the screen before the door. This boudoir opened, on one side, into my mother's bedroom, and on the other side into a small garden, which no one but my mother ever entered. I considered it a supreme honour to be allowed to walk with my mother in its miniature alleys. The plants were all in pots, set out in formal lines. As the seasons changed, one saw peonies, or roses, or chrysanthemums, or sometimes dwarf trees of maple or pine, which gave the impression of a tiny forest. At one end of this garden, which was no bigger than a medium-sized room, there was a stone altar.

Every morning my mother, as soon as she was up, went into the garden, and before this altar she kneeled and said her prayers. She came thus to confide to the great God of Gods the sorrows which made her heart heavy. The place seemed

a refuge and a sacred spot, on account of this daily communion with the Infinite, so precious to her.

There was something very sweet to me in this melancholy which seemed to envelop my mother with an atmosphere of gentleness. I longed to be able to console her. I did not know what it was that made her sad, and I did not venture to ask. I felt it was her secret. So we contented ourselves with talking about her childhood.

She loved to tell me about her father, whose memory was sacred to her. She had loved him above everyone. This grandfather of mine, my mother's father, was named Liou Chang Wha. He had been a great general in his time. My mother was his favourite child, and as, in those days, there was not much chance for girls to amount to anything, he always hoped that his daughter might be brought up as a boy. This wish was violently opposed by his wife, my mother's mother, who was very conventional in her way of looking at life. She was a firm believer in the old tradition that a girl whose feet have not been tied and crippled will not find a man willing to marry her when the time comes to seek a husband. She reminded her daughter, also, that in China marriage is the principal object in life for a girl who respects her parents, and who wishes to follow the divine plan of existence.

My grandfather did not have the heart to with-

stand such crushing arguments. So my dear mother used to hold out her little foot, broken like the wing of a wounded bird.

"The legend is," she said, "that hundreds and hundreds of years ago, the king of one of our great provinces of the South one day saw on the dust the fresh footprints of some woman who had passed that way. The traces were of a foot so exceedingly small that the king at once cried out: 'I wish to make a queen of the girl who has walked in this path.' She was found, and he married her, and so all the women of the province were jealous of her good fortune. Longing to meet with an equally happy fate, they began to mutilate their feet in the hope of diminishing their size. Such was the origin of the cruel custom—so the story goes. Like thousands of others, I have been its victim."

My mother then went on to tell me how she regretted such a false ideal; while it caused a woman to suffer, it did not in any way make her a better companion for her husband. She longed that my future might be more free than her past had been.

"Soumay," she said to me, "you must strike out for yourself. Develop your intelligence first, and then perhaps you may be able to help others and be of use to them. There have been many women in our history who have done great things for their country."

One day, when she had been talking to me of her thoughts and her hopes, and when she seemed to me sadder and more depressed than usual, she told me the story of our national heroine, Moulan.

CHAPTER III

A Chinese Heroine

IT is over a thousand years now since Moulan came into the world. She was born into a family in China where there were no sons. Her father cherished this only child with the greatest possible tenderness. When she was at work weaving some beautiful piece of silk, he loved to listen for hours at a time to the soft noise of the loom as it glided back and forth under Moulan's fingers.

In the midst of this peaceful existence, suddenly, like a bolt out of a clear sky, came the declaration of war. Moulan's father had no soldier beside him to take up the sword and the lance, and to fight the enemies of the Emperor...

In the room where Moulan sat before her loom all sound of the shuttle had ceased and only the girl's sobs could be heard.

Her father, speaking to her, asked: "My child, wherefore do you weep?"

Moulan answered: "I want to be a son to you, Father. I will go in your place to the war."

She dressed herself in uniform. She fastened on her father's arms. She presented herself be-

fore the governor of the province. He did not perceive that this young woman was a woman, and he let her pass.

In order to join the army, Moulan had to cross over the river Hoang Hoa. She lingered a moment on the shores of this beautiful stream. Her thoughts were turned toward the father she had left, and her heart was sorrowful.

"Never shall I pass this way again," she said to herself. "I shall never hear the murmur of these waters. I have chosen to do my duty. Perhaps I shall fall in combat. If I am victorious I shall be able to return on the opposite side of the Hoang Hoa."

Moulan showed the qualities of a great chief. She put the enemy to rout. No one suspected her secret.

The Emperor called her to him, in order to reward her according to her merits. He wanted to keep her among his followers. She refused everything he offered—gifts and position.

"I have won the battle," she declared to him. "I have served my country. But I have still my filial duty to accomplish. I must return to my father, who waits for me."

She did accordingly.

Now, one day, a short time after she had reached her father's house, a gallant officer came rapping at the door. He wanted to ask news of

his valiant brother-in-arms, who had won the admiration of all.

It was Moulan herself who greeted him on the threshold. She had resumed the dress of the young girls of her time; she was clad, and her hair was arranged, with grace.

The visitor did not recognise her.

"Beautiful young girl," he asked, "where is my proud companion who led us to victory?"

"It was I."

CHAPTER IV

I Assert My Personality

I REMEMBER the day when, for the first time, life seemed to me too cruel. My grandmother had given orders that one of her slaves was to be beaten.

Thanks to the political and social progress which I have been fortunate enough to assist in bringing about, our laws no longer allow such abuses, but when I was a child the great Chinese families still kept slaves.

This was what happened:

We were all playing together, all the little girls of the household, in the quarter reserved for the women. Each one of us had her attendant, a child of about ten years old who was appointed to follow her little mistress wherever she went, never letting her out of sight. Although trained at a very tender age to practise a vigilance such as would require all the virtues of a grown woman, these little girls were in reality no more serious than we ourselves. Needless to say we often fought together, but generally the disputes ended without any disastrous consequences.

On the day of which I am speaking, one of my cousins and her little slave got into a quarrel which degenerated into a veritable battle. The first blow was dealt by the young mistress, and a cruel blow it was. It provoked a howl and a prompt responsive attack.

The noise brought everyone running to see what had happened. My aunt took her child in her arms and severely reprimanded the slave. This might have been the end of the incident if my grandmother had not appeared at that very moment. I have already alluded to her old-fashioned way of looking at things. Now, without asking for any explanation, she ordered that the slave should receive ten strokes of the rod. She was, of course, obeyed.

I had followed the course of things from the beginning of the dispute. When my cousin had struck that first ringing blow I had not been able to refrain from a cry of indignation. Now it seemed unbearable that the child who had merely acted in self-defence should be punished in place of the culprit, and for something for which she was not to blame.

I felt the anger rising from my heart to my head. I was so carried away by it that for the first time in my life I was disrespectful to an older person—who, it must be admitted, was making tyrannical use of her authority.

Like a flash, so quickly that no one had time to put her hand over my mouth, I cried out:

"This cannot be! The child who has done wrong is taken into its mother's arms, fondled and comforted. This little slave has a mother too! Where is she? Why has her child been beaten? Oh! this is all too unjust!"

At the same time I rushed over to my little cousin.

"I shall beat you!" I declared.

Then I ran back to the little servant and put my arms around her neck.

Everyone looked on amazed. They all tried to restrain me, to calm me, but in vain. I only shouted the louder:

"You are all leagued together against one little girl. It is outrageous!"

My grandmother grew as white as a sheet. She belonged to a much less noble family than my mother. This inequality of origin was a constant cause of jealousy on her part. She never let a chance go by to criticize the way we were being educated.

"Your child," she said now to my mother, "is very badly brought up. She should have been born in the lower classes! She has such sympathy with them. She is scarcely prepared to appreciate the privileges which have been handed down to her from our side of the house!"

To say to a Chinese mother that she has

brought up her child badly is to inflict upon her the worst possible insult. I felt the arrow drive into my mother's heart, and I knew that she suffered cruelly. In an instant it brought me to my senses. I would rather have died than to have heard my mother publicly blamed on account of something I had done.

Since then I have often lived over that scene, weighing the impressions which it left in my memory.

All too young I learned that no precautions are too great to take for those who wish to become the dispensers of justice in this world. To be sure, I had been quite right in taking up the cudgels to defend a little slave, but this very same impulse, good as it was, had been the means of bringing condemnation upon the being I loved the most in the world.

CHAPTER V

Learning to Read Chinese

THE girls of our family all took their lessons together. We had a tutor who came to the house for school hours. We were drawn up before him in lines, each one of us seated on a little chair before a miniature table, about twenty in all. The schoolmaster was an old man. He wore a round skull cap and big spectacles with tortoise-shell rims. His moustache, long and scraggly, hung down on either side of his mouth.

He taught us how to write. We rubbed the fine brushes on tablets of ink before we attempted to draw the Chinese characters, so intricate, so decorative to look at, and which tell such wonderful stories. For example, to make the letter which means a "house," you draw an open door. To write the word which means to "listen," you put an ear against this door, and so on.

I had never forgotten the conversation I had had one evening with my mother, when she had told me how barbarous she thought it was to maim the feet of little Chinese girls, under pretext of following a fashion considered beautiful.

The time had now come when I was either to have my feet tied like all the other girls of the family, or to declare that I was going to revolt against this cruel custom. It comforted me to feel that, in planning for such an act of rebellion, I was sure to find support in my mother's loving approbation.

It is needless to say that this moment is dreaded by all, for no child willingly accepts such veritable torture. The thing is done in this way: the toes are turned in under the instep and fastened there by bandages which are drawn tighter and tighter as the foot becomes deformed. Aside from the physical agony, there is the singular inconvenience of this strange fashion. The child whose feet are thus bound is unable for a year or more—I do not say to run—but to walk a step.

Thus we were carried to the schoolroom on the backs of our little slaves. They deposited us on our chairs, and when the lesson was over they came back for us, as though we had been so many cripples.

The reproach my grandmother had addressed my mother on the subject of my behavior was still ringing in my ears, so at first I submitted without protest to having my feet bound. My patience did not hold out long. At night I unrolled the bandages which hurt me so fearfully. In the morning I ran to school on my own free little toes. I was already seated and deep in my

work when the other pupils began to arrive, swaying along on the backs of their slaves, and suffering so that they were ready for anything rather than to pay attention to the schoolmaster.

My grandmother was of course told of my disobedience. She considered it with rigid severity. When she saw how badly my mother felt to think of my being made to suffer in this way, and when the pain was so great that I could eat nothing, she realised that my mother wanted my poor feet to grow as nature intended they should. Then she repeated the same words as my mother's grandmother had said of my mother:

"So much the worse for this child. If she won't accept the laws laid down for women, no one will marry her."

I hasten to add that my grandmother, before her death, had the satisfaction of knowing I had received several proposals of marriage! She forgave me in the end for my rebellion, for she had come at last to condemn the old Chinese custom which obliged parents to crush and break the feet of their poor little girls.

Our schoolmaster did not teach us only how to form the beautiful Chinese characters; he gave us lessons also in reading the maxims of Confucius and Monfucius. These reflections, so fine in spirit, upon the duties of man toward himself and toward his neighbour, formed rather an arid subject for children of about six to eight years old.

Yet it was this very instruction which trained our minds along the lines of thought which are at the base of all moral teaching in China, namely, that human kindness is the most precious of all qualities, that man understands better through his heart than by his mind, and that intelligence which is devoid of tenderness is a poor thing.

Slowly and laboriously we spelt out these noble lessons of the Master. We sang them in a monotonous and melancholy tone. I must confess that I tried to lift my voice above the others! Not because I had any special predilection for work, but because I suffered at being shut up in this way. I kept saying to myself that the sooner I had finished repeating my lesson to the professor, the sooner I could run out again and play in the garden.

We continued our lesson-hours through all the four seasons, in summer as well as in winter. The only exception was made at New Year's, when we had a two weeks' vacation.

For this holiday we each received a present and a new dress. It was the custom for us young girls all to wear red silk gowns embroidered with butterflies and flowers. In these costumes we formed a long procession and marched in to wish a "Happy New Year" to our grandparents and parents, our uncles and aunts, and all the important personages of the family. Then everybody in the entire household went to the temple. We

paid our respects to the dead, we burnt incense in honour of their memory.

I loved this holiday. In my long red robe I could quite easily imagine that I was already grown up. And yet, as soon as we had entered the mysterious shadows of the temple, I nestled close against my mother's knees. It seemed to me there that she could protect me from all harm, even from death.

CHAPTER VI

The Seventh Day of the Seventh Moon

ON the anniversary of the Seventh Day of the Seventh Moon—in other words, the seventh of July—all the young girls of the great families of Canton celebrated by a brilliant ceremony the Day of the Virgins. It took us a whole year to prepare for this solemn occasion. It was at the same time a pleasure and a sacred duty to commemorate the seven angels, or the seven saints, one of whom only ever married.

During the winter the young girls of the neighbourhood with whom we were the most intimate brought all sorts of things which they had made with their own hands, to be put aside in our house and kept there until the great day arrived, and they would then be offered to the seven celestial persons to whose purity we were paying this especial tribute.

According to the traditional rites, we had to offer seven of everything we gave. We made the most wonderful landscape pictures with grains of coloured rice. They represented a bridge over which one saw the seven virgins passing. We embroidered seven magnificent gowns, all scattered

over with real pearls. We cultivated seven sorts of flowers, and each sort had to be presented in seven different vases. Seven varieties of fruit were set out upon the table which was laid for the angels. Indeed, nothing was forgotten—there were drinking-cups, dishes, and food sufficient for a banquet which was to last for seven days.

Each year, all these preparations, enveloped as they remained in mystery, were the occasion of cruel disappointments, as far as I was personally concerned. I was full of excitement and curiosity, and of course the older girls always imposed upon us little ones. We ran errands for them, and waited on them, but they never let us into their secrets. In the middle of a conversation on a palpitatingly interesting subject, they sent us off to find something in another part of the house. When we got back, the story, of course, was finished, and we never heard the end of it.

I learned finally what was perhaps more useful than any childish story—how to make the little coloured rice mosaics and the pearl and silk embroideries, and how to prepare the fruit and flowers, so that, now in these days of progress when the young girls of Canton might perhaps abandon these old customs, I have been able to keep up the tradition so precious to us Chinese.

At last the great day arrived and then all the little annoyances were forgotten, and for the space

of a few hours we lived a magic existence in an enchanted world.

The setting of this ceremony was the magnificent hall of our ancestors. Just as the clock struck midnight, the doors were thrown open to admit the most exquisite procession. The men and the older women and the boys of the household were not allowed to take part even as spectators in this celebration. This sacred spot, from which we were generally excluded, belonged for this one night to us girls alone, and we were arrayed with the sole longing to please the spirits of the angels, themselves invisible.

On the pale background of our gowns, which were of blue, pink, green, yellow, there were the most beautiful embroideries—the fingers of fairies seemed to have traced the forms of the rarest flowers and plants, and the most gorgeous birds and butterflies. Our dark hair was wonderfully ornamented with pins and combs of jade and gold. Over our white stockings we wore little slippers brilliant in colour. Thus clad and decked in splendour, rejoicing, and yet timid, we advanced very slowly into the great hall, scarcely moving one foot before the other, in the hope that we might prolong forever this happiness which it had taken a whole year to prepare.

The hall was lighted by lanterns hung at different heights from the ceiling. They cast about them a soft glow; their lights flickered and moved

like something living as the air gently set them in motion. They cast big circles of gold down upon the table where our treasures and offerings were spread out.

On the red coals, which had been placed in flaring vases of bronze, we burned little sticks of sweet-scented wood. The air was full of these perfumes, and above our heads there were clouds of smoke as light as some floating veil.

All the emotion of those never-to-be-forgotten evenings are present in my memory among the wonderful pictures which form part of my childhood's vision. No doubt I am in favour of progress, and I shall always work for what is modern. Yet I cannot help regretting that, in spite of all we do to preserve these traditions, they have already lost much of their precious beauty of long ago.

CHAPTER VII

My Chinese Godmother

WHEN my mother felt a weariness of heart that became unbearable, she sent for the two most faithful of her servants and told them to make ready her sedan-chair. I knew the direction in which she wished to set out. Outside of our home there was only one place where she ever ventured. I waited always, trembling with expectation and the hope that she would invite me to go with her. I was overjoyed when she told me that I could put on my little cloak and take my place beside her, on the cushion of her chair.

We passed through the poorer quarters of Canton without seeing them. Women of the class to which my mother belonged could not go through the streets of a Chinese city in full view of the public. So, before we started, the shades of our chair were drawn down. As soon as our men began to walk more slowly we knew that they were climbing the hill above Canton; we lifted the silk curtains, and my mother let me look out upon the world of which I knew so little.

The road wound upward through the rice-

fields. In the autumn sunlight they looked like a moving sea of green. Sometimes we took a short-cut, striking across the meadows, following a narrow path. Then, as I no longer feared to be seen, I leaned out of the pretty sort of box in which we travelled, and I loved to just touch with the tips of my fingers the heavy sheaves of grain. A little higher up we could see a horizon of distant mountains and now and then through a breach in these hillsides we caught sight of the sea. My thoughts sped on far beyond the beauty of all that was visible to the eye, and which was so new to me. I was thinking of my country and of how China stretched out further than anything we could perceive to an almost unlimited distance. I dreamed of the ships which I had never seen, and which night and day were plying upon the ocean, bound for some port in Europe where they would finally come to anchor.

My mother was troubled by my silence.

"You must be a happy child," she said to me, "my little Soumay. You will have time later to reflect and to suffer."

The thought of travelling turned my mind in another direction. It recalled my father. It was such a long time since he had left us—about four years now—that at moments I almost forgot him. One day, when I was leaning on my mother's shoulder, in her sedan-chair, feeling more than ever loving, I suddenly asked:

"Where is my father?"

My mother sighed, and I saw that there were tears in her eyes. I begged her to answer me.

"If he cannot return here to be with us, why may we not go to find him?"

My mother drew me into her arms.

"Your father," she said with sorrow in her voice, "is in Peking."

Instinctively I glanced toward the far-away mountains which stood out, a dark blue line against the sky.

"Peking?" I asked. "Is that very far away?"

"Very far."

It was my mother's turn to grow silent now, and I felt that she was slipping away from me. I would so have loved to console her for all her sorrows. I felt as though I had the power to do it, as though I must and could comfort her. I took her hand in mine. I held it tight.

"What does it matter," I said very decidedly, "how long we are on the way? We must go to Peking."

"Dearest..."

The sun's rays as they shone now into our carriage lighted up the tears on my mother's cheeks so that they sparkled like crystals.

We did not speak again until we had reached the top of the hill. There our men stopped before a high doorway, roofed over with blue tiles which followed its upward curving lines. It looked like

a little piece of heaven which had dropped down upon the earth to warn visitors that they were about to enter a place of refuge for those who love to meditate.

We got out of our chair, and on foot we crossed an immense garden. At the end of it we came to a temple. The tiles of which it, too, was built were as blue as the sky and as brown as the earth. Under a small pavilion we could see a tombstone, standing upright. My mother paused there and bade me pay tribute to the dead; for, she explained, under this stone rested the ashes of an ancestress of ours who, for some reason no one could explain, had never married. She was known as "Miss Angel," and this name was a true expression of the really divine qualities which she had shown through her acts of loving kindness during her years upon earth.

Touched and impressed by her infinite sweetness and charm, my grandfather had built for her, in this retired place, a temple and a sort of convent. Miss Angel had lived there, surrounded by the other women of our family who had never married. She had left such an exquisite memory, and the souvenir of all the good she did continued to seem so real, that she had finally come to be considered with the reverence due to a saint.

Thanks to my grandfather's extreme generosity, and in spite of the hostility of the Chinese Government toward any plan which encourages

woman to live outside of the natural bonds of wifehood and motherhood, this foundation still subsists. Those in our family who cannot, or who do not wish to take a life's companion in wedlock, pass their days in this retreat, leading the contemplative existence of nuns, peaceful and happy.

Each one of these ladies who lived on the top of the sacred mountain used to adopt as her especial favourite one of the little girls of the family. Like the others, I had my "godmother," and I was always in a great state of impatience to see her. I could scarcely wait to throw my arms around her neck. Yet, as soon as she stood before me in reality, my courage failed me. I became timid. She was so different from my mother, this godmother of the hilltop! Like all of her companions, she was dressed in a black gown, with long, full sleeves, and a small black bonnet which fitted quite close to her head. As Chinese women never wear hats, I was struck by all these details of her costume, and at the sight of them I needed to be reassured.

It did not take long for my godmother to restore my confidence. Her smile was sufficient. She smiled with the gaiety of a child. I felt sure that she was happy. I loved to see how glad my mother was to talk with her. This especial tenderness which she affected for the house on the hill was, it seemed to me, tinged with a shadow of

regret. My mother would have liked to remain there, I felt. In the monotonous routine of this existence of prayer and solitude, she might have been able to forget the sorrows which had come to her in her married life.

At noon exactly the doors of the refectory were opened.

I bounded with joy at the sight of the table laden with the most delicate and wonderful dishes. Only vegetables and fruits and desserts were allowed, but what a feast for the eyes as well as for the mouth! There were *hors d'œuvres* such as I had never seen before, salads which looked like bouquets of flowers, egg-plant stuffed with rice, steamed mushrooms, croquettes no bigger than a Lima bean, luscious pastries, cakes made out of rice-flour, salted almonds, watermelon seed grilled and sugared. What not? Everything was prepared in such dainty quantities, as though to tempt the appetite of a fairy, and served in bowls of rare porcelain, or in cups of incomparable colours.

When the time came to set out again on our homeward way toward Canton, my arms were filled with the toys which my godmother had made for me. I clasped these treasures close to my heart, and cradled by the gentle swaying of our chair, I fell asleep, blissfully happy.

CHAPTER VIII

We Start for Peking

IN China, when a woman is jealous of her husband, everyone makes fun of her. She is not taken seriously. It is true that, at the time of which I am writing, the marriage laws of China admitted the existence of several wives in the life of every man. There was, of course, only one legal companion: the union with her, for better, for worse, lasted until death. But, aside from this unique responsibility, the head of a family, if it so pleased him, had the right to protect more than one member of the weaker sex.

Thus my mother's melancholy, which daily increased, met at the hands of my grandmother with ironical disapprobation. Nor was this lack of sympathy wholly disinterested.

My grandmother was growing old; the idea that her daughter-in-law might set out for Peking and leave her the entire care of our big house in Canton distressed her. Fortunately, my mother did not give up to her grief; back of her outward sorrow she concealed the will and energy of a man. She formed this resolution deliberately, weighing all the risks and disadvantages, and

then, when her plan was completed in detail, she announced very simply that, without further delay, she wished to start for Peking, taking with her her three children—my sister, my brother, and myself. Our eldest brother had remained with my father; it was now almost five years since we had seen either of them.

So my mother and my grandmother entered into a long discussion, the most serious they had ever had, and in which both spoke the truth. My mother blamed herself for not having gone with her husband when he left Canton for Peking; my grandmother admitted that she had retained her daughter-in-law almost by force. She declared that she was ready to make tardy reparation by giving her consent now to our leaving her.

We set out upon our journey escorted by several of the most faithful of our servants. One of my uncles, who did not want to let his sister-in-law venture upon such a long voyage alone, decided to accompany us.

Everyone was weeping as we said good-by to our old home, and started for the river where we were to take a boat for Hong Kong. There was a throng of cousins and friends and servants to see us off. I was sad at the thought of leaving, and yet thrilled at the idea of this journey.

My dear godmother had come down from the hilltop to say farewell. She begged me not to shed any tears, but to think only that I was soon

to find my father, and that we would bring him back with us to Canton.

The little steamboat in which we set out was our own property. Canton is only an hour's distance from Hong Kong, yet I was to see all this landscape of sky and earth for the first time.

Often in looking out of the window of our house I had noticed a beautiful island in the middle of the stream. I had wondered if there were any children like us living under those green trees. Now here we were, gliding along by the very shores of this dream-island, and my mother told me that it belonged to our family. I was proud and happy.

As we steamed on down the river we met a number of little sail-boats. The fishermen in these barks all knew who we were and where we were going. They greeted us, and we waved to them in return. Then they called out to us: "Peking! Peking!" If I had been on the way to heaven, I could not have been more overjoyed.

The sun was setting over the sea as we reached the harbor of Hong Kong. I had never seen anything so beautiful as these gorgeous colours in the sky at the day's end. And when the electric lights began one by one to shine out, it seemed to me that all the stars of the firmament were reflected on earth.

I remember also that as we went into the English Customs House on the Hong Kong docks, I

saw for the first time a European. He looked strange to me, of course, but everything now at every turning was so extraordinary! I could not count the astonishing things I saw. We were in an entirely new world, and I was ready for any surprise.

Some of our relations who live in Hong Kong, and whom I had never seen, came to meet us. Even they seemed different and peculiar to me, and I kept wondering if it were they who were queer, or if it were we who now looked like the European man at the Customs House. I fell asleep that night before I found an answer to the problem.

I was just nine years old at that time. During the three weeks we stayed in Hong Kong I became an entirely new person. There was no limit to the things I wanted to know. My curiosity finished by attracting the attention of our friends and relations. They became interested, and they showed me all that I wanted to see.

Our first visit was to the race-course, the fashionable rendezvous of Hong Kong society. There I saw thoroughbreds and jockeys. I mingled with the crowd of Europeans, made up of English, French, and American men and women, all very elegantly dressed. Even the Chinese people who passed us in their little two-wheeled rickshas, followed fashions in clothes and in the way of doing their hair, unknown to us in Canton. Everything

was different to all I had seen before. All was new, all was wonderful.

My brother and sister were not consumed, as I was, with curiosity. This unknown world frightened them. They preferred to remain indoors. I got into conversation with everyone. I made friends on all sides.

As we owned a number of houses and factories in Hong Kong I obtained permission from my mother to go with our compradores, or commissioners, on their rounds. They showed me the machines. They answered all my questions and explained all until I understod how it could be that these metal engines could move and act as though they were alive, accomplishing tasks of which a man would be incapable.

These compradores could speak many languages, so they interpreted for me when I wanted to talk with the foremen or the directors of our factories, who were generally English. I told them that we were on our way to Peking to join my father. They gave me presents for him. They offered me some of the objects I had seen made by the machines. I held them in my hands very cautiously, a little afraid they might come to pieces. Then these foreigners said:

"Here's a little girl who seems to take an interest in everything."

This was, of course, the first time I had heard English spoken. The compradores translated

these remarks for me. I could not describe my amazement to think that these curious sounds could be put into Chinese, and that they not only meant something, but that it was something that had been said about me!

I visited the big stores where, in the Orient, all sorts of English goods are sold: clothes, plum-cakes, shoes, tennis-racquets, teapots, letter paper . . . what-not?

"She is the granddaughter of our great Tcheng," I heard our compradores explain.

They took me through the streets which my famous ancestor had built. All these houses were due to his enterprising spirit. It seemed to me as though the whole world belonged to us. I fairly danced with joy and pride.

One evening two very old gentlemen came to make us a visit. They had known my grandfather when he was a young man. Their hands were as hard and as yellow as ivory. When they lifted up the little cups in which my aunt had offered them tea, their arms shook and trembled. They spoke of the old days with a certain reverence, and, as I listened to them, my heart was overflowing.

Suddenly, in the midst of these recollections, so intimate, so sweet, they began, with an accent of regret, to allude to certain memories concerning their comrade of long ago.

"Ah!" they said, "if only he had not done this . . . if only he had not done that. . . "

These insinuations greatly disturbed me. As soon as our visitors had gone I hastened to question my mother.

This was what she answered:

"Toward the end of his life your grandfather speculated recklessly. In a short time a great part of the fortune he had made through his own personal effort was lost."

"But then," I asked, agonized, "those houses that they showed me, those streets I saw?... They no longer belong to our family?"

This was the first time I had heard these reverses alluded to. It seemed to me that I was a queen dethroned, and that this misfortune had touched the honour of all our lineage. I had entered Hong Kong by a gate of joy. Now I was to leave it humiliated.

CHAPTER IX

Our Good Wind

ON the steamer which took us from Hong Kong to Shanghai there were more Europeans than Chinese people. The captain was English, but he spoke Chinese, and my astonishment at everything amused him greatly. He asked me if I liked his ship. I thought that I must answer him quite frankly, so I confessed that this was the first time I had smelt European smells, that the oil of the machinery, and other odours, seemed to me less pleasant than the perfumes of our garden in Canton.

During our stop in the port of Shanghai I wrote my first letter; it was to my dear godmother. I felt I must tell her about all the things I had been discovering. The elegant ladies, even the women servants whom we passed in the streets of the city, were of a type entirely different to any I had seen. I rubbed a quantity of ink into my little brush in order to transcribe upon paper all these impressions. I felt that I was a great traveller —in fact, that I had discovered the world.

Though our cabins on the ship were very small, I greatly enjoyed sleeping in this floating house.

As soon as the day dawned my nose was flattened against the port-hole to see if the ocean were still there. The throbbing of the engines made my temples beat; it was so unlike the sounds I was accustomed to—the sounds of nature—yet it seemed to hold a promise for the future.

At last we reached Tientsin. From that port, where we left the ship, to Peking, it is a three hours' journey in the train. I had no thoughts for Peking now, but only for my father. I longed so to see him.

He knew the day and hour, and by what boat we were to arrive at Tientsin, yet he had not come to meet us. He had only sent a servant to help us in case of need. This man did not look at all like our Canton servants. He was dressed differently, and he was much more ceremonious. He greeted us with low bows and with a respectful gravity to which we were not accustomed in the South.

My mother, her three children, and the two old servants who had come with us on our journey, had never set foot in a railroad-train. We were all of us quite dizzy at first. I felt half crazy myself. My surprise was not that such a distance could be covered in so short a time. I was only surprised to think that we did not reach heaven at once.

As we were dressed in Canton fashion, with special colours and styles to our clothes, people

came to the door of our compartment to stare at us. My mother did not even notice them. She was absorbed in the thought of the union she had looked forward to and hoped for, so long, and which was now so near. I saw that she was trembling, and I felt the colour come and go in my cheeks, as I flushed or grew pale with impatience. I was beginning to find the express too slow when at last we pulled into the station at Peking.

All our heads were thrust out of the car windows. We were searching for someone, but how could we ever find him in such a crowd? I turned around, disheartened, when there, in our compartment, I saw a tall man. I was too overwhelmed to speak, but I knew in a flash that it was my father, and that I loved him.

He smiled at us. His manner was most kindly and he seemed very happy. He took me in his arms, and he too loved me from that moment. My father did not kiss my mother; indeed, they did not speak. They seemed to be embarrassed, and I believed that my father in this meeting was glad to show me, since he could not show my mother, all the emotion he felt. So I clung to him.

A number of friends had gathered to meet us in my father's house. Among them were people my mother had known when she was a child. She was so glad to see them again that, for the first

time since we had left home, I thought she seemed happy.

The Peking house was far more modest than our home in Canton. Indeed, if it had not belonged to my father, I should not have liked to live there. But we were obliged to adopt immediately the customs of this new life we were to lead.

My mother had no difficulty in so doing. She knew how to speak the Peking dialect and also the Manchu language. I was perfectly amazed when I heard her talking with her friends, and using strange words, not one of which I could understand. What filled me with admiration was the majestic way in which the Manchu ladies arrange their hair, crowning their heads with a large bow which looks like the wings of a bird, and which glitters with priceless stones: pieces of jade; ornaments of pearls; and jay feathers, all arranged in the most gorgeous designs and colours.

In Peking, when anyone of importance arrives in the city, it is the custom to greet the "wind which brings them." This courtesy, which is considered a privilege, is accorded by right to the person who is the oldest friend of the newcomers. Thus, in our own house, the supper served on the first night was offered by a lady who lived in Peking, but who was a native of Canton. No matter how old friends the Chinese people may be, whatever they do on such occasions is all

planned out in advance with the solemnity of a religious rite.

My mother's friend said to her: "What good wind brings you here?"

"The south wind," we answered.

Then our hostess declared: "The south wind brings luck."

She had sent over from her house all sorts of marvellous things to eat. They were set out on two tables. Around one of them the men of the family and their friends and the young boys gathered; around the other there were assembled the women and the little girls.

Now that I had at last found my father I did not want to leave him for a moment. Throwing all ceremony aside, I ran over to the men's table and nestled close against him. He did not push me away. He let me taste the food he was eating—something which I had never tasted before. He was smiling and happy.

"You must excuse this little peasant," he said to his friends; "she has just arrived from her village."

After supper the guests all took leave, and everyone withdrew to their apartments. I was much too excited to think of sleeping. I wanted to tell my father everything that was in my mind or on my heart. Although it was very late, he said that I might sit up a little longer to talk with him. What I really wanted was for him to

stay for a time with my mother, so that she might at last be happy. I could hear her steps in the courtyard where she was walking slowly back and forth. I ran to kiss her goodnight. After this long, long separation, I was overjoyed to see my parents together.

CHAPTER X

My First Restaurant Dinner in Peking

IN PEKING, as early as the month of December the snow begins to fall in big flakes. I could not help admiring this beautiful whiteness which covered everything, even though I was shivering with cold. I thought often regretfully of our gardens in Canton, where the flowers were always in bloom.

If not of climate, there were other advantages in the way we were allowed to live in the north. I was no longer kept with a troop of children, all under one roof, and subjected to the rigid discipline of our grandmother. I was sent to a girls' school, and there I began to study really seriously the Chinese classics which we are obliged to know thoroughly in China if we wish to have any position in the world of letters or among the intellectual or official classes.

It was my father who, to my joy, decided that I should go to this school. When I think of him now it seems to me that he loved life in a wonderful way. He had no patience with things that bored him, and he found me very diverting. My

curiosity and my energy were always equal to anything he had to propose.

So my first year in Peking passed in the following manner: in the morning I went to school; in the afternoon I went with my mother to pay calls. The ceremony observed during these visits was wearisome for a child. My mother's friends always discussed the same subjects—the weather, of course, then clothes, and the trouble they were having with their servants, their health, and the high cost of living. They paid each other the same compliments which never varied, as they made part of the social etiquette which all well-bred Chinese women are expected to observe. In going from one of these houses to another I did not even have the satisfaction of seeing the amusing sights in the streets of Peking. We went about like prisoners, in a carriage the shades of which were always drawn down. This box on wheels was suffocating in summer-time, whereas in the winter our toes were frost-bitten. Our horse was as ceremonious as the occasion required; not for anything in the world would he have compromised his dignity by going faster than a walk. He was as faithful to the old traditions as I was impatient for progress.

When we were about to enter upon our second winter in Peking, I begged my father to let me go with him as often as possible on his rounds.

At school I had already acquired a certain gen-

eral notion of the history of our country. This enabled me to ask my father all sorts of questions which he was only too happy to answer. Soon when he went to call upon a friend he even permitted me to stay with him during the visit. The conversation generally was about matters of current interest.

As soon as we were alone together again I asked my father to explain all that I had not been able to understand. In this way we soon came to be the greatest of friends.

One day he announced that he was going to show me the most extraordinary sight in Peking: the Ya-men. In Chinese, ya-men means a mouth. He explained that this mouth was a sort of devouring tusk; that it ate up money, intelligence; that it crushed the very soul of the people. I was consumed with curiosity, and at the same time I was rather apprehensive, for my father was vague and somewhat terrifying in his description of the ya-men.

Our rickshas rolled on for what seemed an interminable length of time—about a quarter of an hour, I suppose—through the Tartar or Chinese city, and suddenly stopped before the door of the Minister of Finance. Ya-men also means "Ministry" in Chinese, and I had been completely taken in by this *pun!* I could have wept with shame and humiliation to have behaved like such a child. I had really thought that we were going to discover

some sort of a yawning jaw, with terrible teeth, like those of the monsters in stone which one sees before the temples in China. I wondered if my father had done this to try my temper, or if he was simply amusing himself by teasing me. What I feared was that he might think me too silly to be a fit companion for him.

This was, however, not the case; quite the contrary, in fact. In the first place, he was delighted at having played such a successful trick on me, and, in the second place, when he saw how truly distressed I was, he understood that I had a heart, which, as I have explained, in China is considered the virtue of all virtues. The man of deep feeling is placed above him who merely thinks.

From that day my father and I became inseparable. Wherever he went I was to be seen by his side. The only place where he left me at the door to keep guard was at the Council of the Ministers of State, where he generally spent part of every morning or afternoon.

As my girl's clothes attracted attention when I went about in an open ricksha, it was decided that I should have my hair cut short and thrown back from my forehead, and that I should be dressed in a long silk coat, trousers such as the little boys of my age wore, and boots of soft leather which came part way up the leg and then turned over at the top. I was eleven years old at this time. Disguised in this way, with a little round cap on the

top of my head, I could roll about to my heart's content in the streets of Peking without exciting any criticism. In my divers peregrinations I was always followed by our faithful retainer, Tung Ur. Later, under very tragic circumstances, he more than once risked his life for me. But, in those early days, he was delighted to see the joy I took in being allowed to accompany my father, whom he was proud to serve.

One evening my father took me to dine with him in a fashionable restaurant. Ladies in China are never seen in such places. This was a house several stories high, contrary to the usual buildings in Peking, which seldom reach above the ground floor. So for the first time in my life I climbed up a flight of stairs. I brought my little boots down with a thud on every step, and I imagined that I was a great giant mounting up to heaven.

The table reserved for us was in a room where several other people were already dining. There were electric lights everywhere, and European dishes, and the most delicious food I had ever tasted.

When we got home I told my mother all about our evening, and she was rather scandalized. Though she said very little, I could feel that she did not approve of these rather extraordinary expeditions. The very fact that she did not openly oppose them, and that she seemed so resigned,

made me think that perhaps I was making her suffer. She was perhaps wondering if I, too, were going to abandon her, little by little, as my father had done, and if, so like my father in my way of thinking, and in my nature, I was going to add anxiety to the sorrow already in her heart.

I could not endure the idea that she should perhaps be tormenting herself with such fears, so for several days I pretended to be ill. I did not go out. I wanted to stay close to my beloved mother and to reassure her. I wanted her to understand what I did not know how to express to her—that I could never take any happiness in anything which I felt was grieving her.

CHAPTER XI

A Vow

MY mother's heart was heavy, that I knew, and for a reason which all my childish tenderness could not serve to dispel. Someone who had lived for a long time in Peking had told her a very distressing piece of news—my father had another home in the city where we had come to live with him.

I overheard the servants talking about this in the pantry one day. What I could understand made me utterly miserable. Just about at this time, too, there were frequent discussions, sometimes very painful in tone, between my parents. My father's voice was scarcely recognizable, it trembled so with rage. I could not hear the words that were exchanged, but I felt that my mother and father were drifting apart, and I was alarmed. Sometimes in the midst of these disputes my father got up. In a few moments the sound of the house door as it closed heavily behind him could be heard. All night long he did not return. Then I used to say to myself:

"Will he ever come back?"

What could we do or say to keep him with us?

In this Peking home of ours there was only one detail which recalled the Canton house. Here, as there, my mother had her own garden which opened out of her apartments. In the springtime the beds were full of peonies, in the autumn there were chrysanthemums. The paths between these rows of flowerpots were very narrow, and they led to a stone altar where my mother always said her prayers.

One night, I remember, when my father had left the house in anger, I lay awake on my bed unable to close my eyes. I was listening, always listening...

Suddenly, in the stillness of the night, I heard a very soft step. It seemed to be coming from the direction of the quarter where the men of the family lived, and it was approaching my room. For just a moment I imagined that it might be my father, who wanted to see me, as I longed to see him. He had come to tell me, perhaps, that everything had been explained between him and my mother, and that I would never, never again see tears in her eyes.

The door opened. It was not my father, but my brother who stood on the threshold. He was in his nightgown, bare-footed.

"Soumay, listen!" he said to me.

I went with him out on the gallery which passes before the doors of the bedrooms. I could hear someone sobbing.

"Our mother is weeping," my brother whispered. "We must watch."

Hand in hand, very softly, very timidly, we went toward my mother's room. It was empty, we found, but the door was open on to the garden. We could see her on her knees before the altar. Her head was bent forward, resting on her folded arms. She was all dressed in white, as people are in China when they mourn some loved one who is dead. Her whole body was trembling, and she wept as though her heart knew no hope.

We did not dare go nearer, for fear of alarming her, but my brother expressed what was in my thoughts.

"Perhaps," he said, "she thinks of taking her own life."

We glided across the room and into the garden. There we fell on our knees by my mother's side, and for a long time we wept with her. I felt that our tears could not help her, that we must offer her greater strength than this tender pity, which seemed only to overwhelm her. I got up resolutely. I begged her to return with us to her room, so that we might talk there. She murmured again and again that life was cruel, and that she wanted to die. This idea was too terrible to endure. It gave me the energy necessary to plead with her.

"You think of no one but our father!" I said.

So softly that I could scarcely hear her, she answered:

"I love him."

"And us?" I said. "Your children? Have you forgotten us? You know that we work, that we try to be good, that we want to please you in every way we can. Isn't that something? Doesn't it fill your heart? Can it be possible that you do not love us, your little children, who need you so?"

She had grown more calm. Her sobs had subsided. She listened to me, as I went on:

"It is not only my father who has abandoned you. But you would abandon us!"

A tinge of red mounted to her pale cheeks. She put her arms around us. She drew us to her. Holding us close against her heart, she murmured:

"Forgive me...forgive me..."

She tried to smile at us. Trembling still, she declared:

"I will go on with my life. I must."

She kissed my brow. She looked at us like someone who has been roused from a nightmare. She appealed to us:

"You will be an honour to me? Promise me that you will."

It seemed to me that this was the most solemn hour of my life. I took my mother's hands in mine.

"The day will come," I said, "when you shall be proud of me. I promise you."

CHAPTER XII

How to Keep My Father at Home?

THE discussions which had been so painful to hear between my mother and father were now followed by a silence between them which seemed almost more unbearable than the sharpest words. Whole weeks passed during which they never exchanged a remark. When my father came home from his work he kissed us children, and then he went straight to his own rooms without even stopping to speak to my mother. We saw him at lunch-time, which was our principal meal. But as we always observed our Chinese custom of setting two tables in the dining-room, one for the women and the other for the men of the family, my sister, my mother, and I ate at the same time my father did, but not actually with him. At our evening meal he never appeared.

How I regretted our former separation, when he was in Peking and we in Canton! Then, it seemed to me, distance only kept us apart, and in all voluntary absence there is a certain poetry. We dreamed that we might all be united and happy together some day. We hoped that when

we had found each other again we would know the same joy as of old, which had been only interrupted for a time, but which had not vanished forever. Now, all illusion was dispelled. These daily meetings, passed in an oppressive silence, seemed to emphasize the fact that the situation was irreparable.

I refused, however, to accept any such idea. I kept going over and over in my mind what means I might employ discreetly to make my father understand how we were suffering, to touch his heart.

Finally, I thought of a plan which I hoped might succeed.

I pretended first that I had no appetite. I refused to touch the food that was set before me. After a few days I had grown very pale and I was visibly losing strength. My father noticed this and, as he loved me dearly, he was anxious about me. He asked me a great many questions about my health. I answered that I was perfectly well, but that I had decided not to work any more. My father was delighted with the progress I had made in school, and he was very ambitious for me.

"So, you don't want to go on with your studies?" he asked.

"What is the use?" I answered.

"You will be a little ninny."

"I don't care. I want to have some fun."

"You don't need diversion at your age!" he said.

"Oh yes, I do," I replied.

"Why?" He seemed astonished.

"Because I am very unhappy."

"Who has been treating you badly?" He put the question with a swift movement of tenderness which touched me.

"I am unhappy," said I, "because I never see you any more in the evening."

My father laughed at this. He put his hand gently on my head and looked at me lovingly.

"I work very late, little daughter," he said. "I spend the evening at the Finance Department with my friends. Then we have supper together."

"Why not take supper at home?"

I knew what a gourmet my father was. Nothing could be too delicate, nor too well prepared to suit his fastidious palate. Our *chef* was one of the very best in Peking, but he was much too grand a personage to be asked to stay in the kitchen after our dinner had been served. Knowing this, I had been making my plan of campaign.

"We could have some supper prepared in advance for you," I explained. "As soon as you came in it could be served. I could keep you company while you were eating. Come in as late as you like, but come... Please do... oh, please!"

My father answered neither yes nor no. That evening he returned to the house.

CHAPTER XIII

I Find a Way

I KNEW well enough that my father would soon weary of eating cold suppers, so the very next day I began to take cooking lessons of our *chef*. I learned how to prepare rice the way we like it in China, very dry and yet thoroughly cooked, how to make a lobster omelette, with a touch of onion; how to roast a fish with mushrooms; how to make a *mousse* of chicken; how to fry shrimps in a light batter—all the special delicacies my father particularly enjoyed.

I was beaming with pride the night when, not suspecting that it was I who had been the cook, he tasted a dish of mandarin duck over which I had agonized, and declared:

"Really, our *chef* is an artist!"

Later on I even let the servant who waited on us go to bed early, and I attended to every detail myself. Two rooms were reserved for my special use, and I worked away, convinced of the merits of what my fingers produced, because in my heart I was always longing that we might all be united again.

As soon as my father came in, tired from his

day's work, I was ready. It does not take long to set a table in China, for everything is arranged in the pantry on a large round tray exactly the size of the table-top. On it, among other things, is a lighted spirit lamp to keep things hot, small porcelain bowls which we use as plates, ivory chopsticks, silver spoons, and cups into which a sort of wine, served hot, is poured. At every course this tray is lifted off with everything on it, and a fresh tray all set with the next course is brought in.

What a lot I learned in those midnight talks with my father! He told me of all he was doing. He explained to me the organisation of our Department of the Interior. He showed me just how each province was governed. Thus, as we chatted together, I was given the clearest possible lessons on the most serious subjects. My father made me see how, in all countries, the Governments are always in the control of a privileged few, while the people everywhere are made up of the masses whose lot in life is labour and sacrifice. He often insisted on the fact, that, in order to govern well, a man must be a good man.

"If," he said, " a man loves only the privileges which his position gives him, he deceives others. If he has no real taste for his profession it will prove a deception to him. Imposition and indifference are both signs of weakness. If you want to be a force, my little girl, love your work, whatever it is, and you will be sure to do it well."

When my father talked to me in this way I was so exhilarated, so uplifted, and so confident, that I would have liked to set out at once on some important mission. I longed to succeed because I had followed his advice.

I was not so absorbed in my own dreams, however, as to forget that, while our delightful talks lasted on into the small hours of the night, my mother was in another part of the house, alone.

One evening when we had finished our rice, which in China we eat all through the meal, I called my father's attention to the fact that the rice-bowl was still almost half full. I did not tell him that it was on purpose I had prepared this extra quantity. I merely remarked in a tone which I tried to make sound indifferent:

"Rice isn't good when it's heated over. What shall we do?"

I waited an instant to see if he grasped what was in my mind, and if he looked displeased. But as he did not seem annoyed, I said, timidly:

"Shall I go and get Mother?"

He did not say no.

With one bound I had dashed across to my mother's room. I spoke so quickly that at first she could not understand what it was I wanted. She hesitated to go with me in this unexpected way to join her husband, from whom, in her thoughts, she was surely never separated for

long. I drew her toward the door. When at last she stood before my father, I called out:

"Something is burning in my kitchen! I shall be back in a moment."

At a time so stirring for them, I did not want to let them see how moved I was.

When I returned they were sitting opposite each other. I took my place between them. We were all three embarrassed, and happy. Little by little we drew my mother into conversation, and after that night I always prepared supper for three instead of two.

CHAPTER XIV

At Fourteen I Become Engaged

THUS we had again become a united, peaceful family. Perfect harmony is doubtless too much to expect on earth: I was soon to discover this fact.

Early in the winter, when I was nearing my fourteenth birthday, my grandmother informed us that she was weary of life in Canton, and that she had decided to come and join us in Peking. She arrived about the middle of December, accompanied by a whole retinue of servants.

At first she was in wonderfully good spirits, for, according to the Chinese custom, she was made a great fuss over by us and by all her friends, who quite outdid themselves in welcoming her.

But all things have an ending, and when at last the excitement was over, and our existence resumed its daily routine, my grandmother began to show signs of her usual dissatisfaction. She thought that my mother did not keep up sufficient style, nor observe enough ceremony in our establishment. The simplicity with which we lived did not seem to her suited to the high office which my father occupied in the Government. She insinu-

ated that her daughter-in-law, my mother, did not treat her husband with sufficient formality. If the truth must be told, she was jealous of our little midnight suppers, to which, very naturally, we did not invite her. In order to avenge herself, she made terrible scenes. The result was easy to foresee. My father, irritated by all these petty annoyances, too respectful, however, of his mother to show that he disapproved of her attitude, gradually resumed his former liberty. All that I had tried to build up crumbled to naught.

My brothers, at the time of which I write, were also often away from home. The older of the two had a position in one of the northern provinces of which my uncle was Governor; the younger one was in a European college at Shanghai. Our family life had lost all its charm.

Fourteen is the age at which Chinese girls become engaged. More than once during the spring my hand was asked in marriage of my father. I had no aversion to marrying, nor had I any especial desire to marry. The truth is, I had never given the matter any serious thought. I saw that my grandmother, on the contrary, had all her expectations centred in this hope; the idea delighted her. I imagined that, while she was busy hunting for a husband for me, she would leave everyone in the household more in peace. My wisdom was the shortsightedness of a child. I little dreamed that my silent resignation, which

in reality was only a superficial docility, would end by causing us all the greatest possible trouble.

Among the suitors for my hand, my father, prompted by my grandmother, had let his choice fix upon a certain young man whose father was Governor of Canton. His family, his position, his fortune, were all exceedingly important.

Our house, and home life, which became more and more dreary as time went on, left me in a rather desolate state of mind which, I must confess, at the age of fourteen, was somewhat enlivened by the thought of being engaged and of giving parties and receiving presents—in a word, the excitement appealed to my childish imagination.

So, as I did not show myself hostile to their plan, my father and grandmother accepted the advances of this young man.

My engagement was celebrated in the month of May. That is the season in Peking when the peonies bloom in all their glory.

It will seem strange to Europeans that in China everyone comes to an engagement party except the two people for whom the party is given! We were neither of us to appear; nor, indeed, had I ever seen this young man who was destined to become my husband. He was still in Canton, where he was to remain until the time of our marriage, which had not yet been set, nor even discussed.

Just the same, I was determined to lose as little

as possible of these spectacular ceremonies which were to be given in honour of my engagement. So, posted in my room, hidden behind the curtain, as I peered out into the courtyard of our house, I saw a procession which advanced with great solemnity. A blast of trumpets sounded as the so-called "delegates"—those who represented the future husband and his parents—fell into line. Then followed the plaintive notes of the flutes as eight white horses appeared; their harnesses of scarlet leather were studded with gold, and across their breasts red satin scarves were fastened. They were led by valets in a livery richly embroidered, surmounted by caps with long plumes. Between these horses, which advanced in pairs, were hung baskets overflowing with fruits and with gifts of every sort.

I could not restrain myself any longer. I rushed down into the reception-room. It was hung on all sides with red silk embroidered in gold characters. My grandmother was enthroned in a large armchair, raised on a small platform, around which a crowd of friends had assembled. One by one they greeted her, they "kowtowed," which is to say they prostrated themselves before her, touching their foreheads to the ground. She was radiant at being treated and adulated as though she were an empress. She was far too absorbed and much too rejoiced at her own importance even to notice my presence.

The gifts which had been sent for me were magnificent. There were jewels and ornaments in gold and jade, and hairpins of pearls, and presents to bring luck.

Our custom is that each one of the guests must eat a piece of the engagement cake, which is supposed to ensure a long life.

That night, as I fell asleep, I wondered who had been the real heroine of the occasion? Grandmother or I?

CHAPTER XV

A Chinese Scandal

WHEN, at last, one day, my grandmother declared to my parents that my fiancé was eager to have our marriage celebrated before the end of the year, and that he had written to ask us to set the date, it seemed to me as though an arrow had been driven through my heart.

The idea of marrying had remained perfectly vague in my mind: it seemed unreal that such a thing could be. What was to become of me?

The little I knew of the young man who had been picked out for me did not attract me. On the contrary, they said he was a spoiled child. Although he was only just eighteen, he already had a Government position. Such a privilege, granted to a person so young, could not possibly be a reward of merit: it meant simply that, fearing he might fail in his examinations, his father had quietly paid the necessary amount of money to provide him with the place he coveted. My fiancé did not owe his present rank either to his own efforts or to his personal ability.

Moreover, I had never met his parents, his

sisters, or his brothers. My brother, who came home from time to time on vacation, and who had just spent the holidays with us, looked upon this marriage for me with neither confidence nor favour.

As my fiancé was a Government official, he was supposed to spend most of his time at the City Hall. As a matter of fact, he was to be seen running around in all directions. His parents, worried about his constant comings and goings, had employed a servant whose especial duty it was to follow him wherever he went, as though he were a young child! All this showed a weakness for convention and for superannuated customs which horrified me when I realised that these were the people with whom I was preparing to spend the rest of my days.

My brother told me about another prejudice of my fiancé which still further overwhelmed me. In our Peking house we had a telephone. My father used it constantly. Sometimes he let me telephone to his office, just to say that I loved him and was thinking of him while he was at work. Someone had told my future husband that such were our habits. He declared that he considered this imitation of European customs greatly misplaced in a young Chinese girl. As far as he was concerned, never would he think of tolerating in his house such a modern instrument of progress as a telephone!

Of course, I was quite aware of the narrow-mindedness of the old Chinese families who have never travelled, or who have never visited even the important cities of their own country. On a matter like that of having or not having a telephone, which could not radically modify my existence, I was quite ready to sacrifice my "advanced" ideas, but, to cap the climax, I was told that my future father-in-law did not admit the idea that I should go on with my studies.

"She knows too much already," he had been heard to say. "She spends most of her time out of her parents' house. A woman of our rank in society should not run after learning."

Fortunately, this remark scandalized my father as much as it distressed me. I began to suspect that perhaps I might find in him the support I needed now to help me carry out the opposition I had decided to make to such an unbearable union. My mind was absolutely made up.

I fully realised the extreme gravity of such an audacious move. Ever since China has had a history there had never been a case known of a broken engagement. In spite of that fact, I had determined—no matter what the consequences might be—that I would not be forced into a marriage with a young man who had no personal merits whatever, and who intended that my life should end before it had even begun.

The situation was greatly complicated by the

fact that the family to which my fiancé belonged was one of greater standing than our own. These people boasted of twenty horses in their stables—a rare luxury in China. The collection they possessed of ancient costumes which had been handed down from one generation to another was of unparalleled splendour. The rank they occupied at Court, owing to the functions confided to my future father-in-law, was superior to our own. Taking all these reasons into consideration, it was most desirable that the breaking off of my engagement should be as discreet and as much enveloped in mystery as possible. Every effort should be made to conciliate those whom we were very probably going to mortally offend. I knew what my father's delicacy would be about such a matter, and I was afraid that the decision at which I had arrived would never be carried out. I wanted to bring things to an abrupt ending. This was the way I stated my point of view to my father:

"You can force me to light a fire, but you can't make me throw myself into the flames."

While my poor parents were wearing themselves out trying to find an intermediary who would undertake to carry out this difficult negotiation, I persuaded my brother to write to my fiancé directly and tell him exactly what my feelings were on this important subject.

My father, to whom of course I showed the

letter, did not disapprove of it. The substance of what I wrote was that I could find no happiness unless the man who was one day to become my husband had first been either to Europe or to America to finish his education. If the long journey which this necessarily implied seemed impossible, then I insisted that this young man should at least come to Peking and follow the courses at the University which is run on entirely European principles. In this way he would be able to acquire from his professors some knowledge of modern progress.

I planned, of course, by such a proposition, to put an end to any engagement between us. The pride of my fiancé could not be wounded by my suggestion, as it made things appear as though the affair had been ended by mutual consent.

With a very diplomatic touch, he wrote my brother the following answer:

"Your dear sister's ideas are most excellent. Unfortunately, I cannot do as she wishes. It is quite impossible. Europe, you admit yourself, is really too far away to be thought of. I could not dream of leaving my parents to undertake such a perilous voyage. On the other hand, could I really, in my position, go back now to school? You have forgotten that I occupy an official position. I could scarcely permit myself to abandon the responsibilities which I have assumed, and which are heavy indeed."

This letter was not at all satisfactory to me because, as far as our marriage was concerned, nothing had been accomplished. Things stood just where they were before—we were still engaged. I decided that I would write a letter all by myself. I had no idea how preposterous such an initiative would appear on the part of a little Chinese girl who was only fourteen years old, but I composed my epistle as follows to my fiancé:

"I respect and admire your sentiment about duty. The fact that you would not on any account separate yourself from your parents proves how kind-hearted you are. In the same way, you show an absolute devotion to the task which has been entrusted to you. I would not, and could not, encourage you to look differently upon these two matters. But—this you will readily understand —I also have duties and obligations to fulfil. First among them is that of protecting my own future. I must be quite frank and tell you that my intention is to go to America or to Europe to finish my studies. Indeed, my hopes in this regard are so great that I do not know how long it may be before I can realise them, but surely a very long time. Your duty as a Chinaman, the son of a Chinaman, is to marry young. Not for anything in the world would I wish to be an obstacle to you in accomplishing your destiny. Marry some young girl, beautiful and worthy of

bearing your name. My way lies clear before me, and I shall not stop nor turn back now."

When I had inscribed my name at the end of this letter I had the firm conviction that I was no longer a child, but that I had become a real person.

Words fail to describe the scandal which followed this strike for freedom! The parents of the young man were absolutely horrified. They thought any misfortune would be preferable to the disgrace of seeing their son married to such a frightfully badly brought up young person as I was. My grandmother declared that I had plunged our family honour into shadow. My parents did not openly reproach me, but they were miserable. My mother did not conceal her tears: like mine, they were of true emotion, for she realised as well as I did that this marriage, had I been forced into it, would have been the end of all my dreams.

According to a very old Chinese custom, once in so often, the important families assemble in order to deliberate in private upon all that has occurred of interest to each. Everything is discussed in these reunions—the behaviour of the children, the conduct of the husbands and wives, the general situation, and the trend of affairs. In this way a sort of personal code of family honour is established, and perpetuated, in an almost sacred manner.

The entirely unheard-of way in which I had broken off my engagement was of course made the subject of the severest criticism. My father was bitterly reproached for this open rebellion of his daughter. Rumours of all this, of course, reached even the women's quarters of our household. Everything was in a state of turmoil and confusion, but in the midst of all I felt relieved. I was free again. I begged to be allowed to go to Europe.

It was decided, as I hoped, that it would be better for me to leave Peking for a time, but I was still too young, my parents thought, to undertake a very long journey. The plan adopted was that I should go to Tientsin. There I was to continue my studies in a girls' boarding-school kept by some American ladies.

CHAPTER XVI

American School in Tientsin

THUS the programme which I had laid out for myself in my letter to my fiancé was realised much sooner than I could have dreamed.

My brother, who held a Government position in the North, had come to Peking to be present at the family gathering to decide upon my fate. He was about to return to Kirin now, so it was arranged that he should take me to Tientsin.

The storm through which we had just passed, the excitement and emotion, had stirred me to the depths of my soul. I had caused my parents embarrassment and anxiety. Now I felt it was my duty to honour them if I could.

This was the resolution I made as I entered the girls' boarding-school at Tientsin directed by these fine American ladies. I was most favourably impressed both by the plan of study and by the subjects taught. I only hoped that some day I might see the Chinese schools as perfectly organised and directed throughout our country.

We were about forty pupils in all. There were some American, some English, and some Chinese

girls of good family. All the lessons were given in English. I was not the youngest student, but I was put from the first with pupils older than myself. The Chinese studies which I had followed so faithfully in Peking had given me an excellent foundation. Not only do these classical courses develop the memory; they teach one how to learn, and they give one a very useful training in endurance. I could study for an almost indefinite length of time without feeling tired.

It was not long before I could speak a little English. I was dressed and my hair was arranged now in European fashion.

In Chinese we have an expression which must, I think, have originated on the stage, but which is generally used. We say that a person is, or is not, "in the *rôle*." With my English clothes, a hat which was the first I had ever had on my head, the skirts which I now wore instead of trousers, I felt very much "in the rôle." I kept on with my Chinese studies, of course, but nevertheless I felt that henceforth all the notions I could acquire of progress were coming to me from the West. My eyes seemed to be strained toward that side of the horizon.

I learned how to drink tea as the English take it, with sugar and milk; how to eat bread and butter and toast; how to use a knife and fork instead of chop-sticks, and how to take exercise.

We used to go every day for a long walk, something unheard of for Chinese women.

I worked so intensely that for the time being I did not seem able to think much or to receive any new impressions. It seemed to me that all this effort I was making was only preparation for the things that I might undertake later on. I wanted first to learn as much as I could in the shortest time possible.

The American ladies who kept the boarding-school were exceedingly pious. Every morning and every evening we all had prayers together. On Sundays there were two services in the chapel to which we were all taken.

At first I complied with these rules regarding church, as I wanted to show proper respect for the discipline in the school. When I believed that I had proved my spirit of submission, I asked the directress to receive me, as I had something to talk over with her. I requested that she allow me to be excused from attending these religious services. She explained that she considered it my duty to follow them, and she could not therefore give the permission I desired. In turn I answered very gravely that I wanted seriously to do my duty, that my conscience told me clearly where it lay, and that I tried to live up to what I believed was right, and do what I knew I should, each day. I also emphasized the fact that I deeply and truly respected the religious convictions of my com-

rades. All I asked was that the same consideration be shown me for my own point of view; and my conviction was that at present my surest way of honouring God was to consecrate as many hours as possible of my time to my studies.

I was rejoiced to see that my appeal put in this way seemed reasonable to the directress. From then on I was not forced to close my books on Sunday.

CHAPTER XVII

A Presentiment

TWO whole years passed thus in the Tientsin boarding-school. I was completely absorbed by my studies. I had learned English well enough to be able not only to follow the classes, but even to enjoy English literature. I preferred the English novels, as by reading them I got a direct impression of life as it goes on in Europe.

The letters I received from Peking kept me in close touch with all that was happening at home. My grandmother, unable to endure the blow to her pride of my broken engagement, had decided that nothing could keep her from returning to Canton. My father had given up his work temporarily to accompany her. My mother and sister were alone in Peking.

At just about this time I was awakened one night with a start, as though some strange apprehension were clutching at my heart. I seemed to feel some invisible force impelling me to start at once for Peking to join my mother. It was clear to me that she was in distress. I fell asleep, but was awakened again with the same presentiment.

This happened a number of times with an ever-increasingly intense feeling that I must go home at once.

In the morning I concluded that I must have had a nightmare which I would try to forget, but what I could not dispel was the sensation of anguish—it haunted me. It was impossible to concentrate my thoughts. I could not work. At last I went to the directress of the school. I asked permission to leave for Peking. Of course, I did not tell her of the anxiety which weighed like lead upon my heart. I was afraid she might try to argue me out of it, and explain that I was nervous and excitable because I had been overworking. But as I was always obedient, and a very earnest pupil, and as it was easy to see that my mind was made up regarding the necessity of going to Peking, the permission was given me as I desired.

The faithful Tung Ur, in answer to a telegram I sent announcing my arrival, came to the station to meet me. But on the way to the house he was not able to give me any news which could explain my uneasiness. He merely remarked that for the last few days my mother had seemed to be worrying about something.

My mother's joy at seeing me, and her evident distress—easy for loving eyes to read on her face —were heartbreaking. She was waiting for me, with my sister, in the big drawing-room.

"What misfortune has befallen us?" I cried at once.

My mother did not want to answer at first.

"Soumay dear," she said evasively, "you are too young to hear sad things talked about. . ."

"Anything," I cried, "is better than this uncertainty in which I have been living. You see yourself that I know nothing, and yet I felt that you were in trouble and that I must fly to you."

Touched, overcome, my mother then confessed that my brother, who was at Kirin in a Government position, had been speculating. He had been reckless, and he had lost about $20,000. Obliged to pay up the money at once, he had taken this amount from the funds entrusted to his keeping by the Government. He was at the mercy of the first inspector who chanced to present himself.

My father was in Canton. My mother did not know to whom she could turn in order to save while it was still time such a serious situation. She did not dare confide in our uncles—much less in any friend. She had worn herself out trying in vain to think of some way whereby she might get the money to my brother and yet keep absolutely secret this most unfortunate affair which, were it known, would throw dishonour not only upon my brother, but upon our name forever.

As my mother related this, helpless, she wrung her hands. To be obliged to greet me on my homecoming with such a confession was more than

she could bear, and yet, at the same time, I felt that, in an obscure sort of way, she counted upon me to do something.

The thought that once more the blame would come back upon her, and that she would be held responsible for her son's misdeeds, was crucifying to me.

I explained to her that at the Tientsin boarding-school I had learned many details about Government organisation in the North, and that, as I remembered it, the State inspectors allowed officials ten days before turning over any public funds which they might have collected in the district where they were named. We still had time to reach my brother with the amount of this cruel debt.

My mother listened to me as though I were bringing salvation. Yet the thing was not clear enough to relieve her agony of mind.

"Granted," she said, "that we have time enough to reach your brother, to whom could we confide this sum? Who could take it to him in Kirin? We cannot tell our secret to anyone."

"I shall go to Kirin myself," I replied with absolute composure.

My mother greeted this announcement with a smile of indulgent compassion. I appeared to her as full of good-will, no doubt, but like a child whose remarks cannot always be taken seriously. She explained to me all the complications and the

difficulties of such a journey, as they appeared to her.

"Kirin is a long way from Peking, my dear child," she said; "at least a day and a night in the train. You have to pass through a part of the country controlled by very bad people, brigands who behave in such a lawless manner that even men feel some uneasiness in travelling there. A girl of sixteen could scarcely undertake such a voyage alone. You see, Soumay, there is no hope ... We are lost..."

"No," I answered. "I can take with me as many servants as you like, but I am going. I must go. Nothing can stop me."

My mother's objections were finally overcome. She gave in, and I spent the rest of the day getting ready for the journey.

My first errand was to the bank where my mother kept an account. I cashed an order from her for $10,000. They gave me the money in bills—an enormous roll of them—and yet not nearly enough to cover my brother's indebtedness. I gave this first amount to the faithful Tung Ur to carry. We went back then to the house. I explained to my mother that she must give me some of her jewels, and that I could take them to a pawnshop. All Chinese ladies have part of their fortune in gold bracelets, which are extremely heavy, and which they never wear—they keep them as a hidden treasure, sometimes even buried,

but always accessible in case of sudden need. The time had come now for my mother to part with some of these objects which had a real intrinsic value, and which were precious also as souvenirs; they had belonged first to her great-grandmother.

I got back into my ricksha which Tung Ur was pulling. As soon as it began to grow dark he drove me to the obscure, narrow little streets where the money-lenders hide themselves. I saw these dear old family treasures weighed before my eyes. I stifled all emotion. I would not allow myself to think for a moment of the reason which had brought me to such a place. Perhaps my lack of experience courted imposition. However that might be, I could not discuss prices. I accepted what was offered. It was enough for our needs.

CHAPTER XVIII

I Save the Family Honour

THE next day I took the train for Mukden, on my way to Kirin. The money was stowed away in a valise. I was dressed in European clothes. I paid especial attention to all the details of my toilet, which was very elegant. I fancied that if I looked like a person in luxurious circumstances the people whom I chanced to meet on my journey would think I was travelling merely for pleasure.

My suite was composed of Tung Ur and an elderly woman servant whom we had brought with us all the way from Canton.

When we arrived at Mukden, it was already night, and we went at once to the hotel in the railroad-station. This was the first time I had ever been in a house of the kind, entirely European. All I saw was exactly like the descriptions I had read in the English novels, and I ended by imagining that I was the heroine in one of these stories.

The manager of the hotel inquired politely about my journey, and I told him that I wished to go directly on to Kirin by the midnight train.

Then he asked me if I had any of the Kirin provincial money, or if I would like to have him change my Peking money. This he said he could do for me.

The offer sent a chill of terror through me. It came over me like a flash that my brother could not put back Peking money in the safe from which he had taken Kirin bank-notes. This would arouse suspicion at once. In an instant I saw what must be done. I would have to spend the night at Mukden and wait until the next day in order to change my money at a bank. I could continue my journey to Kirin the following night, with a delay of twenty-four hours.

So what had seemed at first a great annoyance was really a most fortunate occurrence.

Before getting into the train the following night I bought for Tung Ur and my maid two third-class tickets. I got into a first-class car alone. I put my valise behind me, and, in order to seem perfectly at ease, I opened an English book and tried to appear absorbed in what I was reading.

At that time the day cars in the Mukden railroad were built with two long seats facing each other as they do in a street-car or an omnibus. At the opposite end of the car from where I was sitting a European had settled himself. He looked like an Englishman and seemed to be a gentleman. At first his presence did not inspire

me with any anxiety. I noticed, however, after a time, that he had put a monocle in his eye and had begun to stare at me in the most persistent manner. What disturbed me especially was the fact that I had never seen anyone before making use of a single eye-glass and that I had not really the slightest idea what such a thing could be for.

As the night wore on my astonishment changed to uneasiness. Every time that I glanced up from my book, which by now I think I was holding upside-down, I found this man with his eyes fixed upon me, scrutinizing me. I decided that he had undoubtedly been in the bank when I changed my money at Mukden, that he had seen me, and that, for reasons easy to imagine, he had followed me. This new apprehension did not shake my firm resolution. This man was perhaps a thief, but of one thing I was sure—he could not rob me of the money I was carrying with me. Oh, how I regretted my stupidity in having bought third-class tickets for my servants! I had been afraid that if I travelled with them both first-class I might attract too much attention.

The train rushed on, making a deafening noise. If I had called for help no one could have heard me. Moreover, on such long stretches the stops are very few and far between.

Finally the arrival of two Chinese officers who got in at one of the stations greatly comforted me. The relief to my mind was so great after

the intense strain that I let my head drop on my precious valise and I fell heavily asleep.

The awakening was too horrible. I suddenly felt that my rug, which I had placed across my knees, was being snatched away. In a flash I was on my feet, my valise behind me. The two Chinese officers had got off the train while I was sleeping. I was alone now, in the middle of the night, face to face with this unknown man.

He put his hand on my shoulder. It was obvious that he was strong enough to lay hold of me if he wanted to, and throw me out of the train. It was entirely useless to try to show violence. I lowered my eyes an instant.

"Oh, the dear, sweet little girl," he leered at me.

I was shaken at this from head to foot... It was not the money he wanted! I had been afraid of him when I had supposed he was a highway robber. All my courage returned when I realised that he was a vulgar brute, drunk perhaps, and who did not distinguish the sort of person to whom he was addressing himself.

As he now drew even closer to me I pushed him back with all my strength, and indeed with such force that he fell over in the middle of the car. At the same time I cried out:

"You had better look out for yourself! My husband is coming to meet me at the next station.

He will give you the good thrashing you deserve!"

He wiped his forehead, which was cut and bleeding.

"All right, all right," he mumbled. "How could I know that a young lady running about all alone would be so ferocious?"

The man was a coward, as I had supposed. He did not move from his corner again, and the moment the train pulled into the Kirin station he jumped off the car and took to his heels.

This disgusting adventure at least had one advantage. It made the meeting with my brother easier. I could scarcely wait to tell him what had happened. The loathsome manner of the man had already begun to seem like a nightmare which I could hardly believe myself. But on the floor of the car we found a proof of its reality in the shape of a gold button, a sleeve link, or something of the kind, which had dropped off when I pushed this tipsy creature over. We picked up the little object, and my brother, terribly overwhelmed, declared he would keep it always as a souvenir. The tears gushed from his eyes when I told him what I had undertaken for love of him, and the success with which I had met. It all seemed to him like some unbelievable miracle. He confided to me that in his distress he had told all to his director.

So we went together to find this personage who

was a true friend of my father. For the honour of our name I entreated him never to speak to a living soul of this sad story. He was surprised at my enterprising spirit, and he promised to do as I asked. He added that he could scarcely believe I had never been to Europe. I must confess that in the midst of all my tribulation this remark made me very happy!

Also I was relieved when I heard him declare that, if he had known what I was going to do he would not have allowed me to take such risks. He would have arranged matters for my brother.

I had accomplished what I had set out to do, and it was with joy in my heart that I asked my brother now to take me to see our uncle, who was the Governor of Kirin.

When I told him that I had come with two of our servants to spend a few days with my brother, my uncle thought that I was slightly insane, but he could not help remarking that he found me very energetic! I didn't care how crazy he thought me, if only he never found out the real reason for my presence in Kirin.

Whatever the opinion my uncle had formed concerning me, he presented me to all his friends. I received a great welcome and I was exceedingly happy. I was taken about everywhere, to see all the sights of the province which I had supposed to be a land of perilous adventures. Indeed,

things went only too well, for, before I left, my brother's director asked for my hand in marriage!

There was no question of such a thing for me, so, accompanied this time by my brother, I set out again on the return journey to Peking.

When my mother saw me, she looked at me a long time, tenderly, wonderingly.

"Soumay, dearest," she said, "you are more than a daughter to me. It seems as though in you I had several sons."

This went straight to my heart and it gave me new strength. I had tried to help my own family, and I had succeeded in serving them. Now I longed to one day become useful to my country.

CHAPTER XIX

The Empire Begins to Crumble

I DID not go back to school at Tientsin. I seemed to have been roused to a new consciousness, and I felt that from now on life could give me greater experience than any I could gain through books. Moreover, current events at this particular time took an unexpected turn which also was to help in framing my career.

My father had been back from Canton for only a few weeks when the old Empress died.

Often, in my long midnight talks with my father, he had told me of the scandals that went on at Court where part of his time was passed. But, in my mind, still vague as to politics, these stories seemed to be merely the natural continuation of the old chronicles of Chinese history, which have been handed down for thousands of years. I had never been sufficiently in touch with what transpired in our Government or at Court to thoroughly understand the present situation. Now, however, firmly established in my heart was the conviction that I must work for my country. This belief, which haunted me with a persistence at the same time inspiring and absorbing, caused

me to take a more lively interest in politics than ever before.

The death of the old Empress gave me a natural opportunity to hear much of the conditions in which the people of China had been living for a long time.

A messenger had been despatched from the Imperial Palace to inform my father of the drama which had transpired. I waited to see what impression this news would make upon one, who, since his youth, had held a high position in the Imperial Government.

"This death is a deliverance," he said very simply. "The grandeur of China is eternal, but it has certainly declined during the reign of the Empress."

This remark caused me to reflect for a long time. It was a great surprise to me and I longed to understand better just what my father meant. I knew, of course, that the Empress had the reputation of spending money in a recklessly extravagant way; the splendour of her clothes, the unheard of magnificence of the fêtes she gave at the Palace, had been severely and openly criticised. But, at the same time, everyone said she was charitable and kind. Above all, she possessed that irresistible sort of charm which seems to claim for a woman indulgence and justification for her human faults and weaknesses.

As soon as the moment permitted I asked my

father to tell me the truth. I was old enough now to understand all. I noticed an accent of sadness in his voice as he answered me.

"My little Soumay," he said, "this death of the Empress must be something more than simply the end of a long life—the old régime itself must expire now. In ancient days our Emperors built the famous wall of China which you saw from the train window on your way to Kirin. This wall separated us from the outside world and protected us from our enemies. Warfare has changed its methods. The wall today remains as a monument merely, which adds to the beauty of our country. But between the East and the West, between ourselves and progress, an insurmountable barrier has arisen which has separated us for over fifty years. This time it is not a wall of masonry, it is a moral obstacle which has stood in our way, and that moral obstacle has been the work of the old Empress. The wrong done by her must be righted. The contact which her violent and extreme egoism rendered impossible, must now be established. It was the Empress who forbade the creation of schools and boarding-schools such as that you attended in Tientsin, where you studied and were taught something more than Chinese history and Chinese geography. When the Empress made important public loans, when for fabulous prices she sold concessions to Europeans, it was in order to obtain the

money required for her own personal pleasures. The fate of her people did not preoccupy her. She only asked that her subjects remain quiet, even if such tranquillity meant that they had dulled their forces in sleep, in opium... What real anxiety could she feel for the future of the vast Chinese population, she who was born of another race than ours, a Manchu, a descendant of our former conquerors!

"As you know, we were vanquished over two hundred and fifty years ago by this hostile race from the North. The shock of this defeat was so unbearable for the young Chinese Emperor, that, after writing a letter in which he asked forgiveness of his people, this last representative of our Ming dynasty committed suicide by hanging himself in view of the Palace of Peking from which his enemies had driven him. The tree still stands to which he attached the rope which was to end his life. This tragedy took place in 1644. Ever since that date we have been, as I say, exploited by the Manchus. They have drained our riches without developing the country, they have parcelled the land to foreigners without increasing our prestige. Their first acts were to humiliate the Chinese. They forced us to wear Manchu costume, they obliged our men to let their hair grow in the long tail as a sign of servitude, 'like a horse's tail,' they said, and as horses they tried to drive us.

"No doubt," my father went on, "we considered the Manchus as barbarians, for they had no culture, no literature. They were cruel and without honour. They sacked and pillaged our towns and villages. Yet the Manchu Emperors had to call upon the Chinese to hold the high positions for which they were unfitted in the Government. It is easy to understand what profound antipathy they inspired, not only an antipathy of race, but a radical opposition of ideals. The Manchus were warriors, militarists, an army, not a nation, an army of autocrats.

"We Chinese, as you know, Soumay, are not only peace-lovers, but democratic in our convictions, as our history shows. Our first Emperor Yao, who reigned over four thousand years ago, declared in his last will and testament that his son was not to succeed him by right of birth, but only in case he should prove himself worthy to be a ruler. It is over a thousand years since we abolished feudalism, or the hereditary privileges of an aristocracy. For centuries all official appointments have been awarded to men who have passed competitive examinations with honours. These examinations being free to all, many of the humblest children have risen to positions of responsibility. What could be more antagonistic to these Chinese methods than the ideal of the present Manchu dynasty?"

My father paused a moment, and I dared not speak, seeing how absorbed he was.

"The selfish, autocratic spirit of these Manchus," he resumed, "was personified in this famous woman, this intelligent tyrant, the Dowager Empress who has just died. Unscrupulous and heartless, seductive and gifted, she terrorized those who did not yield to her, she corrupted with her favours those who came under the strange spell of her personality.

"When, in 1878, the Emperor died, this 'favourite,' who was not even his legitimate wife, took the reins of the Government in her cunning hands. No obstacle proved of lasting resistance. She kept in shadow the veritable Dowager, the widow of the Emperor. When his heir, Kwang Siou, an adopted son, became of age, the Dowager Empress prolonged her custody and continued to rule as Regent. This young Imperial Prince, as though hypnotized by his adopted stepmother, made only one effort at reform. In 1898 he roused himself from his lethargy. Germany had seized the harbor and district of Kiao-Chau; England and France, following her example, had exacted certain territorial concessions from China, which inspired Kwang Siou with sudden patriotism. He determined to imprison the Dowager Empress and to accomplish a complete reorganisation of the political, social, and military system of China.

"Unfortunately, the officials upon whom Kwang Siou depended to seize his adopted mother, turned traitor. They revealed to the Dowager Empress the plot of which she was to be the victim, and the reforms which were to be instigated under the inspiration of Western science. The result is easy to foresee; Kwang Siou was placed in custody in the small palace on the Lake in the Forbidden City. The Dowager Empress issued a proclamation in the name of Kwang Siou, stating that he had appointed her as his guardian and that, unable to rule, he had named as his heir the son of his brother. This child was so very young that the Dowager could prolong her tyranny as Regent.

"In 1900, two years later, a Revolution swept over Peking with blood and fire. You are too young, Soumay, to have any personal recollection of these tragic events, but you have heard of the Boxer War. The Boxers were men from the Northern provinces which had been sacrificed to foreigners by concessions of territory. They had formed a league to seek reparation. The Dowager Empress, convinced that her integrity as a tyrant would be compromised by the opening of China's door to Western science, enlisted these Boxer Revolutionists in her service.

"Many young Chinamen, to be sure, during the ten years preceding this uprising, had gone to Europe and to America to pursue their studies.

When they came back to China they could not help asking themselves why their 'brothers,' as they call the people, were so miserable, why nothing was done to help them, morally, mentally, or physically. The natural riches of our country are unlimited and easy of access, with our splendid rivers and our immense coast-line. In many places the ground is fertile enough to produce four crops in the twelve months. Then why, these students wanted to know, did thousands of labourers die of starvation every year? Why, since the Chinese have a scientific and an inventive turn of mind, why was it possible that every spring whole regions should be inundated by floods which destroyed houses and land, and sometimes made millions of victims?

"Was it not inevitable that the blame should be thrown where it belonged? On the imperial, autocratic régime, on the Dowager Empress?

"The influence which these young students began to exercise secretly made the Dowager Empress uneasy. She understood, and she made clear to her ministers, that such a movement could be checked only by suppressing its leaders. The necessary plan was to stir up the people to a reaction against foreigners, against Western science and progress which the Europeans and Americans bring with them wherever they go.

"The Dowager Empress sent out through Peking and the suburbs popular orators who were

drilled in advance as to the speeches they were to make. There was little difficulty in persuading the very humble ignorant members of the population that the story about the foreigners' hatred of China was true. The recent concessions to Germany, England, and France, gave weight to the story that the Europeans wanted to lay hold of China's riches, and, little by little, of her entire territory. Once fear and hatred had been sown broadcast by this sort of propaganda which did not go further than a group of people all more or less devoted to the Dowager Empress herself, it only remained to give the signal to her allies, the Boxers. The most violent uprising took place, followed by mob-riots and by acts of irreparable gravity.

"Even today public opinion in Europe is convinced that this revolution was a spontaneous outburst of the hostility which China feels towards foreigners. Nothing could be further from the truth. This manifestation was the result of an intrigue which had been woven underhandedly by the old Empress and her Manchu entourage. For generations we have been judged, not by Chinese, but by Manchu traditions.

"Now the news has come that the Dowager Empress is no more, and that her son Kwang Siou, immediately after her death, has also expired. No doubt he died as the victim of the statesmen—Yuan Shi Kai first among them—

upon whom he had counted for aid in establishing general reforms, and who had proved traitors to him and to his ideas. They or he had to die...He was the weakest...And now the destiny of China is in the hands of a child, a 'Boy Emperor.' The Regent, a decadent Manchu Prince, is weaker and less interesting than his brother, the late Kwang Siou."

As my father talked I felt a growing responsibility which stirred me to the very depth of my soul. I was determined to act. But how? And in what manner?

"These young students," I said, "who long to see our country regenerated, where are they now?"

"In exile," my father answered. "A few have returned to Europe. Many have gone only as far as Japan, so that they may be on hand when the first chance offers itself to return. What will the future be for our country? Only one fact seems perfectly clear. Under the government of the Boy Emperor, this poor, weak little child who inherits the throne, things are sure to go from bad to worse. The Manchu nobility will seize upon everything that can be turned into money or privilege for them, exactly as the crows begin their ugly work on a body scarcely cold which is already helpless."

My father sank into silence. I could feel how melancholy his thoughts must be. As for myself,

from that hour my mind was made up and I realized that the unique chance of salvation for our country was in the abolition of the old régime. We must work in order to attain that end as quickly as possible. There was no time to be lost. I would go to Japan to find the exiled leaders. I would join with them, and follow them, whatever the cost, in their determination to save China.

CHAPTER XX

I Join a Secret Society

SEVERAL days after this conversation with my father I spoke to him about a desire I had always felt to visit Japan. He did not, of course, dream what was my real intention.

Nor could I confide in him. Like a delicate veil which stretched between us, I now felt that something for the first time separated us. My father's ideas concerning the internal and external politics of China were exceedingly just and profound; he deplored the conditions to which our people were subjected; he suffered to see the gradual decline of his country, and yet he was still too much attached to his old conservative ways of thinking to take any part whatever, or even outwardly to approve any revolutionary enterprise. I, on the contrary, after deliberate reflection, had come to a decision which never altered. I was convinced that not only the old régime was the obstacle to all progress, but that it must be abolished. All our ambitions and hopes would remain sterile, I was sure of this, so long as China was dominated by an Imperial Manchu Government.

In addition to the information—so enlightening—which my father had given me, I had been able to gather further facts which enabled me to complete the plan I wanted to make.

I learned that the Boxer War had been followed by a reaction in Chinese public opinion which would no doubt afford a favourable opportunity for the anti-Manchu revolutionists to become active. The Kwo Ming Tang Society, or Society of the Land of Brothers, the strongest and oldest of the republican groups, had withstood all attacks, it had continued to work in the strictest secrecy and with untiring energy.

I did not, of course, dare to tell my parents of the resolutions which I had formulated in my mind. Indeed, I had refrained from making the slightest allusion to anything which might arouse their suspicion. Above all, I wanted now to go to Japan. I wanted to join the Revolutionists exiled there, to talk with them, to put myself at their disposal.

My father was not at all opposed to my making this trip. He thought I was curious to see something of the outside world, and that I would be glad to continue at the Girls' School in Tokyo the studies I had begun in Tientsin. At Kobé we had a cousin who occupied the position of Consul. My father knew that he would be glad to meet me when I landed, and to be of assistance to me in every way, so he gave his consent very readily

to this journey which, as far as I was concerned, held infinite hopes for the future.

During the voyage I met two companions, young girls like myself who had been waiting an opportunity to travel to Japan in order to go to school there. Little did they dream the torments, the longings, and the almost ferocious determination which were hidden by my calm outward appearance. They saw in me a conventional Chinese girl of seventeen who had been brought up in a family of old traditions. These friends were accompanied by their maid. I had with me the faithful Tung Ur.

I was much too absorbed during this crossing by all that was in my mind and heart to even notice the flight of time, or to perceive the beauty of the wonderful Japanese landscape as it appears on the shores of the Inland Sea.

From the moment my father had first spoken to me about our revolutionary leaders I had felt for them as much esteem as admiration. Yet I had no letter of introduction to any one of them, nor had I the slightest idea how I was going to discover their actual whereabouts. I was determined to find out their ideas, to grasp their spirit. Personally I had no notion as to how I must begin action.

As we drew nearer to the port of Kobé my anxiety increased. Japan seemed to become more and more vast. How could I dare count upon a

mere chance to bring me in contact with those I wanted to know? They were only a few, scattered here and there among a population of millions...

My cousin gave me a hearty welcome. He was, I dare say, somewhat astonished at the curiosity of a modern Chinese girl whose desire to see the world sent her forth in this way, alone. But I explained to him my wish to follow certain courses of study which would complete the somewhat superficial lessons I had begun in China. Of my real object in coming to Japan I said, of course, not one word to my cousin. He explained to me that in Japan there is no university for girls, nor even which girls can attend. My only opportunity, therefore, would be to enter the Tokyo Girls' Boarding School.

The news struck terror to my heart. Shut up behind the four walls of a girls' school in Tokyo, I would be little more than a prisoner under constant surveillance, and all my hopes would go up in thin air. So I explained to my cousin, who was a kindly person, that the voyage had tired me very much, and that I would ask him to let me enjoy the hospitality of his home for a few weeks. During this time, I explained, I would be able not only to rest, but to become better acquainted with the country in which I was going to take up my temporary residence.

This idea seemed very natural to the Consul.

He encouraged me to go about and see the sights of Kobé. Thus, accompanied by one of his servants who spoke Japanese and who could interpret for me, and followed by my good Tung Ur, I set out to visit the city in a ricksha, like any tourist.

Almost all the exiled Chinese revolutionists had arrived in Japan without any money. In order to subsist, many of them had taken work in the factories or banks; the more fortunate had opened small shops where they made just enough to subsist. I knew this much from what had been told me in China. So my first visit was to a store which my cousin's servant told me was kept by a Chinese. I went into the place alone, and, after looking around a moment at the things on the counter, I suddenly asked the shopkeeper if he could give me the addresses of any compatriots who were revolutionists.

Luck was with me!

The merchant in disguise was one of the men in the revolutionary party. We talked together for a long time. When I left he asked me if I could come to a meeting to be held in his rooms the following day. I made a great effort to impress upon my mind the directions he gave me as to how to reach the place where he lived. At the appointed hour I went to this rendezvous, with Tung Ur as an escort.

My friend, the supposed shopkeeper, presented me to two well-known revolutionists who were

then the directors and the leaders of the Kwo Ming Tang Society—Mr. Woo and Mr. Wang. I maintained an attitude of extreme reserve. They, in turn, asked me many questions as to the object of my visit. No doubt they were rather suspicious at first and I must confess I was somewhat mistrustful myself. The sincerity with which I answered every subject they broached ended by reassuring them. This confidence once established between us, grew from one meeting to another, as I continued to frequent these new friends, who finally confided to me their plan of action.

They started from the premise that all progress in China was dependent upon the abolition of the old régime. This could be obtained only by taking the most radical measures; first of all, the overthrowing of the Manchu dynasty. This must be accomplished before any effort to regenerate China could really succeed.

I listened to them, glad to know what their ideas were, and also the methods of action which they meant to adopt. The certainty that the dream which haunted us could be realised now became firmly fixed in my mind. I signed my unreserved endorsement of the Kwo Ming Tang or Society of the Land of Brothers.

After this step I was summoned to a reunion of a more secret nature, where I received the final initiation. I therein took the solemn engagement to remain faithful and to serve to the end, with-

out faltering, the cause which was to liberate China. I swore that if such a sacrifice might be of use, I would give my life for my country.

For several months I continued to attend these secret meetings, without anyone thinking of following me to see what I was about. When all the plans and projects of my friends had been made known to me, I explained to my charming old cousin, with a slightly weary air, that the climate of Japan was not the sort which could agree with a girl brought up in Canton and unused to such constant rain. He protested at what he supposed to be merely a caprice. But I managed to hold out against all the advice he tried to give me.

The truth of the matter was that in Kobé I could be of no use to my friends, whereas in Peking I could render a veritable service as intermediary without arousing curiosity. The daughter of an official who held an important position would be the last person, under present circumstances, to be suspected.

So it was decided that I should receive messages, direct or indirect, from the revolutionists who were still in hiding in the south of China, and that I should transmit these messages to the leaders of our party who were exiled from their mother country. Inspired by this thought, I was able to overcome the affectionate protests of our Kobé cousin, the Consul, and once more to return to Peking.

CHAPTER XXI

The Kwo Ming Tang

I HAD given my cousin the impression of being a very capricious young person. Now, when my father saw me back again in Peking, he said:

"Well, well! I think you must have grown very lazy, my child!"

I gave many excuses, but not the real ones. I said nothing whatever about the bond I had formed with the revolutionists and which was growing every day stronger. I merely announced that, after thinking things well over, it seemed to me that the duty of every Chinese girl was to know her own country first. I wanted to study China thoroughly, meet some of our *savants,* find out the needs of our people, and try to seek a remedy for their sufferings. Later, there would still be time enough to travel abroad, and I should be better able to profit by all I saw.

My father felt, perhaps, that sort of weariness I have observed in men whose hair is beginning to turn gray: he seemed indifferent to the multiple projects and pre-occupations, the changing plans and varying hopes of the rising generations. Per-

haps, too, he approved of what I said. The fact is he did not oppose me in my desire to stop school altogether. This granted, I was free to do what I liked, provided always that I observed sufficient secrecy to arouse no suspicion.

My brother was the only person of our family in my confidence. He knew of the double life which I was leading now. He sympathized with all my thoughts and feelings, and our mutual trust in one another was absolute.

As I had to account in some way for my frequent absence from the house, I explained to my mother that we had founded a society, the object of which was to open schools and spread learning throughout China. This effort my mother heartily approved.

To my father I gave no definite explanation of what I was doing. I knew that he was as anxious as I for the betterment of our country, but that he would never take the risks which I had determined to run. If our enterprise succeeded I was sure that my father would rejoice with us, but if we told him in advance he might prevent us from carrying out our plan.

During this period of organisation upon which we had now entered, we tried to increase as much as possible the sources from which we could obtain information, and at the same time we kept our secret rigidly among ourselves. We had no general place of reunion, we did nothing out-

wardly which might be remarked. It was in our house that the revolutionists met each other, quite openly. They came to us as my brother's comrades, friends he had made during his long stay in Shanghai, in Sechouan, in Kirin, in Canton, or in other places. As such my father welcomed these young men cordially, as one does any young students who are taking a holiday and who need to be diverted.

With the pretext of receiving and amusing our friends, my brother and I created a veritable centre of revolutionary activities, and we were thus enabled to work together regularly.

Our Society counted among its members young people and old, women, officers, and millionaires. Their fortunes were placed at the service of our cause, for the same spirit of sacrifice moved us all, and it was understood that we would spare nothing which could be of use, neither money, nor reputation, nor life. Our ideal of democracy must triumph. A single principle guided us—to give without taking.

It was Tung Ur who drove me in my ricksha to these secret meetings of the Kwo Ming Tang. The people who saw us as we passed along the streets of Peking, I in my European clothes, driving post-haste with my human pony before me, could scarcely imagine the grave anxieties which prompted my comings and goings.

Our meetings were held with a calm sort of

solemnity. We had no discussions, for we all held exactly the same point of view. But we had to choose our leaders and decide what the aptitudes of each were, and how to distribute our work. Little by little our Society became organised like a veritable Government. There was a Secretary of State whose speciality was interior politics; a Secretary of the Treasury; a Secretary of Ways and Means; a War Department, the direction of which was confided to the army officers in our Society. They were entrusted with the task of recruiting soldiers for the cause. All correspondence which such an administration involved was addressed to my brother. Every week messengers were sent from Shanghai to bring us the news of how things were progressing among our members in that city. Owing to the official position my father had held for so many years, the letters which arrived from Canton were never opened by the Manchu censorship. In this way we were able to obtain all the necessary information concerning the progress of our ideas in the South. This was most important, as the centres established at Nanking—the old capital of China —and the South in general, had been from the first the cradle of revolutionary ideals. In Peking, the Manchu influence made it difficult for us to take the initiative. We therefore waited for the South to give us the signal to act.

Our Department of State included still another

Ministry which was destined to play not the least important rôle. What shall I call it? I scarcely dare say the "Department of Death," and yet the officials who presented themselves for this particular service took a solemn oath to accept whatever orders were given them, and to carry out all instructions, whatever they might be, even though it should cost them their lives. There was a rush of volunteers ready to immolate themselves in this capacity, which in China we call "Gnanshada."

I was appointed to the State Department. We fully realised the powerful influence of foreigners in China, and we did not want to alienate them from us if possible; if hostile to what we wanted to undertake, they could put a stop to our undertaking. As I could speak English, and had lived for a time in Japan and in Tientsin, where I had made a great many friends among the Europeans, the choice fell upon me for this post of *"officier de liaison."*

It seemed advisable for me to begin to lead as worldly an existence as possible in the cosmopolitan society formed by the diplomats of the various legations. I accepted invitations for luncheons at the Hotel des Wagons-Lits, which was then the rendezvous of the young group who liked to amuse themselves. I took tea every afternoon in the English fashion. I went galloping over the hills with my European friends, a "gang" of

boys and girls. We loved to ride out on our ponies to the hills around Peking, and have a picnic in one of the old, crumbling temples that are so beautiful even in ruins.

No one dreamed what was really in my mind, nor how full my heart was of the secret it enfolded. I was accepted by my friends as a Chinese girl of a very old family, but not so conservative that she could not go quite wild over European fashions, and above all, European ways of amusing herself.

This did not prevent me from having my well-established plan. I wanted to make many friends, so that I would be known everywhere, and so that everyone would have confidence in me and in my character, personally, the day I should disclose my dream...

CHAPTER XXII

Mr. Lee Yu Ying

MY life went on in this way all the summer of 1911. Toward September we received news through our messengers that the revolution was about to break out in the South. This first rumour was almost immediately followed by more definite information—the uprising had become general throughout all the provinces of South and Central China, Wuchang being the starting-point.

The Manchu general sent at once by the Regent, the Boy Emperor's father, to quell this outburst, had failed to make any impression upon the violence of these manifestations. His futile attempts were followed by a more successful military expedition commanded by Yuan Shi Kai. A provisional Republican government had been set up at Nanking, under the presidence of Sun Yat Sen, with Lin Sun as President of the first House of Representatives, Chang Ki as first President of the Senate, C. T. Wang as Secretary of Commerce, etc. The revolutionists were coming back in throngs from exile in order to uphold our new chief.

In the North, conditions were less propitious. At Peking we were living in the very heart of the Manchu Empire. Opposed as we were in principle to the idea of showing any violence, we still hoped that we might avoid all bloodshed, although our comrades in the South had not succeeded in so doing. We did not declare open warfare upon the Dynasty. Our intention was to impel the Manchus to abandon the throne more by the power of logic than by force of arms.

The Imperial Family—the Boy Emperor, the Regent, and their household, who numbered several hundred Imperial Manchu princes and princesses—it must be remarked, lived in fear and trembling, yet they obstinately held out against us. They vowed that we could not shake them from their established and hereditary position, and that it was they who would master us.

We took comfort in the fact that the Court and those assembled about it disposed of no means to achieve our ruin, which were not, to say the least, inferior. They began, in the first place, by offering us money. Then they proposed to give us titles of nobility, which, according to their personal point of view, represented temptation such as a revolutionist could not possibly resist. Is it necessary to add that they did not know us very well?...

Forced to admit after a time that our democratic principles, our republican convictions, were

dear to us, and that we loved them as much as they cherished their antiquated passion for money and for Court rank and etiquette, they finally changed their tactics. To our surprise, we saw the Regent give orders in the Boy Emperor's name that all the revolutionist leaders who had been languishing in the Peking prison for months, should be set at liberty. Wang Ching Wei, Wang Fous Sang, and others among our comrades, were thus able to resume their militant action for our party.

The Imperial Court imagined that, once free, these public agitators would have only one thought in their minds—not to return to their cells in solitary confinement. They—so the advisers of the Regent supposed—would be so fascinated by the generosity of the Manchus that they would renounce their former ideals. Really these men and women of the old régime could not grasp the fact that we revolutionists placed our work above everything else—above life.

Meanwhile the Nanking Government was obliged to resort to measures which daily became more and more radical. If the Manchus continued to hold out so obstinately, it had been decided to call out an army of volunteers in the North to drive them out. There was but one opinion on this subject; everyone was agreed; from the humblest of the people to the most im-

portant general, a wave of enthusiasm swept over and animated us all.

Now it was just about at this time that our friend and comrade, Mr. Lee Yu Ying, arrived in Peking, to set before us his personal point of view in the matter. He is one of the men to whom China today owes the greatest debt of gratitude. He has given everything for his country: his time, his example of untiring self-sacrifice, his entire fortune—a large one—nothing has been spared. Himself the son of one of the most important personages in the entourage of the Dowager Empress, Mr. Lee Yu Ying, in spite of this powerful influence in his early life, has been from the first one of the moving spirits of modern China. A firm pacifist, he could not make up his mind to condone the plea for overthrowing the autocratic Manchu régime by an armed intervention of the military. He implored us to reflect well before acting, and not to adopt the Nanking policy, but to seek some other solution for our problem. To his mind the thought that innocent blood might be shed was intolerable.

The project which he submitted for our consideration, and which he had elaborated with Mr. Wang Ching Wei, in their desire to avoid extreme measures, was this: instead of a general uprising in which a great number of Chinese would perish inevitably, we were to sacrifice a few individuals

chosen among those whom we knew to be the leaders.

Mr. Lee's plan was adopted.

Our Society then determined to address a petition to the Regent and to the Boy Emperor and the other members of the Imperial Family, who were obviously the main obstacle to all our hopes of progress. In the petition we were to demand that they renounce their right to the throne and withdraw completely from power, playing no further active part in Chinese politics. If they refused, we were to make use of bombs.

This decision required the immediate summoning of the recruits who had pledged to give their lives at a moment's notice. Many fresh volunteers offered themselves. We enrolled them in the Gnanshada, or the Department of Death, which became one of the most active branches of our Society.

Though it may seem paradoxical, if considered superficially, in reality we were convinced of the more merciful attitude of the new policy. The man who gave his own life to take that of a traitor, would at the same time save many innocent existences.

The difficulty of procuring bombs now confronted us as a serious problem. We could not think of bringing them through the Customs, where everything is examined on its arrival at the Peking railroad-station. How were we to get

the materials necessary for the manufacture of these instruments of destruction? No one offered to carry them by hand. The mission was delicate. The police, we knew, were vigilant, clever, and difficult to deceive.

Feeling convinced that a woman would arouse less suspicion than a man, I volunteered for this service. I felt absolutely sure that I could carry the effort off with success. The circumstances, moreover, were all in my favour. I had been in the habit for several years of travelling about very freely, and I knew that my faithful Tung Ur would not fail me if I wished to take new risks, whatever they might be. Then, too, everyone thought of me as the daughter of an official, and finally, it was generally known that my brother and I were in the habit of spending a great deal of our time with foreigners. Under the circumstances, no one could for a moment suppose that Soumay Tcheng was a revolutionist.

CHAPTER XXIII

My Strange Baggage

I LEFT at once for Tientsin, where Mr. Lee Yu Ying and Mr. Wang Ching Wei were waiting for me. They showed so much real feeling that I was touched. They insisted with some emotion upon the risks to which I was going voluntarily to expose myself. They agreed with me, however, that my duty was clear and unmistakable, and I ended by making them share my absolute confidence in our ultimate success.

The rooms of the Kwo Ming Tang Society occupied several houses in Tientsin. A meeting was held the night of my arrival in order to discuss and determine upon the details of our plan. Besides Mr. Lee Yu Ying and Mr. Wang Ching Wei a number of revolutionists were present, and I was delighted to find among them several girls whom I had known at the boarding-school I had attended for two years.

It was arranged that I should return to Peking with two valises. In one we were to put the bombs empty; in the other the dynamite which was to be used for loading them.

I sat up almost all night, planning, packing,

and re-packing my strange baggage. When at last the bombs and the dynamite had been safely stowed away in the bottom of the valises, I covered them over with some underclothing, and then I hid everything under my bed, and I called for Tung Ur to come to speak to me. I wanted to give him his instructions.

The first thing in the morning he was to dress himself as a coolie, or porter, with a long linen blouse and a soft felt hat. Thus disguised, he was to go to the railroad-station. There he would join the usual crowd of coolies who flock around the exits waiting for travellers with hand-luggage too bulky to carry themselves. As soon as Tung Ur saw me drive up, he was to rush forward and to immediately seize my two valises. They were so heavy that they might have aroused disastrous suspicion if I had allowed a stranger to touch them. Moreover, I could not risk the dynamite in hands which might have nonchalantly dropped it!

Two of the revolutionist comrades were to follow me closely without seeming to know me, and they were to get into the same train I did. In case of any unexpected complications they would be on hand to do whatever they could to help. The express for Peking left at nine forty-five.

That November morning, it seemed to me, would never dawn. As soon as the sun rose, I was up. I dressed with great care, wearing Euro-

pean clothes. I called a carriage in due time and had my two valises placed under my feet. It was very cold and the sharp autumn wind was a good pretext for covering my knees with a big shawl which hid everything.

Wishing to be as prudent as possible, I waited until the last moment before starting. Above all things, I did not want to have a long time to wait at the railroad-station. Once in the carriage, I urged the coachman to drive with all speed. Tung Ur saw me coming in the distance. He ran forward to meet me and, as had been agreed, seized the two valises.

The employés in the station all knew me, and we passed hurriedly through the crowd without being asked for our tickets. Tung Ur settled me comfortably in my compartment and then I saw him vanish behind the long line of cars. When he reappeared, only to jump into a third-class carriage as the train was starting, he had changed his hat, taken off his coolie's blouse. He was quite himself again, the good and faithful retainer of an honourable family.

I felt wonderfully calm. I was sure nothing horrible could happen to me. All the details of this expedition had been studied out carefully. We had even found a happy solution for the most serious obstacle which threatened to obstruct our whole course of action—how to pass the Peking Customs.

Thinking in advance of all the difficulties which might present themselves on my way, I had enlisted in our cause the sympathy of a European man who was a close friend of my brother's and of mine. I have not spoken of him hitherto, but he was indeed a precious ally and he had already rendered us inestimable services. He was a young diplomat, then Secretary in one of the European legations. He was exceedingly liberal in his opinions, and from the very outset he had been convinced that we were building our dreams for the future on the very principles which are the source of all social progress. With a courage for which we shall owe him an everlasting debt of gratitude, he had pledged himself to help us to the end with our campaign for the regeneration of China.

As a diplomat, it is needless to add, he enjoyed especial privileges in the matter of Customs House regulations, being able to pass at all frontiers without submitting to the usual examination. Our friend had proposed that he meet me at the station and help me through this difficult moment by lending me the protection of his official position.

Meanwhile, in the train, my valises were safely tucked away under the seat upon which I was sitting. My two revolutionist friends were walking back and forth in the corridor. Now and then they passed before the door of my compartment,

casting an indifferent glance in my direction. Several acquaintances of mine, who happened to be travelling by the same express, had taken the seat opposite mine. We chatted together about all sorts of insignificant matters, and their somewhat frivolous conversation was a great relief to me. Yet I could not really forget for a moment my two valises. My eyes kept coming back to them with a fixed stare, and I must confess that the journey seemed to drag on for an interminable time.

At last we pulled into the Peking station.

I cannot describe the relief I felt when, as I leaned out of the car window I caught sight of our friend, the diplomat. He was waiting for me, faithful to his pledge, cordial and smiling. My foot had no sooner touched the ground than he told me he had arranged a very safe hiding-place where my brother was expecting me. I could take refuge there and stow away my terrible bombs, where they might remain without risk until, under cover of night, I could join my associates.

Everything happened just as my friend had planned.

A certain group of revolutionists, both men and women, who pretended, for convenience, to be all of the same family, had rented a house in the Chinese city, near the Tchen Men. They had

worked together for the cause, without so far arousing any suspicion.

As soon as it was quite dark I went to this house, taking with me my bombs and the dynamite.

The welcome I received was quite overwhelming. In the long hours of waiting these friends had become anxious. They had agonized lest some accident had befallen their envoy. However delicate this mission was, it was the first I had undertaken, and I had carried it out successfully.

CHAPTER XXIV

Ready for Work

FOR three months, once or twice every week, I made the journey between Tientsin and Peking, always with the same object. I grew more and more confident as time went on. In order to get through more quickly I decided to bring back with me on a final, farewell trip, a great quantity of dynamite and a considerable number of bombs. All this filled an enormous valise.

The trains which connect Tientsin and Peking are almost all "flyers." The port of Tientsin is the last station of any importance before Peking on the Mukden line, which corresponds directly with the Transiberian railway and with the routes which continue by way of Korea to Japan. These trains have certain modern comforts, such as sleeping-cars, dining-cars, and first-class compartments connected by corridors, with "boys" in attendance, and Chinese "guards," or conductors.

I had no sooner settled myself in my compartment, with my huge valise, which stuck way out from under the seat, than the "boy" who was on service stepped before the corridor door. He

leaned forward toward me, pointing at the phenomenally large piece of baggage I had with me. Very firmly and deliberately he explained that it would be impossible for me to travel with this veritable trunk. I could not keep it with me. I must have it checked at the next station.

On my previous trips I had often tipped this same boy, as is the custom everywhere in China. My generosity had apparently made no impression on him. He declared that if he did not apply the regulations rigorously he would be in danger of losing his place.

Though I showed no signs of agitation, I was overwhelmed. What was I to do? I tried to explain to the boy that my valise contained some very valuable porcelains—my father owns a celebrated collection. In the baggage-car these fragile objects would be broken inevitably. It was decided that I must have an explanation with the conductor, who would be coming along now at any moment to take up the tickets.

I did not sit down again, but remained standing, in order to hide as well as I could with my skirts the end of the valise which protruded beyond the seat.

As soon as I caught sight of the conductor my courage came back to me. He was an employé I chanced to know well. I was able to greet him with kindly inquiries about his wife and children. Delighted to give me news of his little family, he

of course did not notice anything! But he had no sooner passed me than I was to have another shock.

All of a sudden a strange, sinister noise made itself heard, a gentle, spluttering, whistling sound which came from directly under my feet. I thought, of course, that the dynamite I had with me was getting ready to explode.

Fortunately, I was alone in my compartment. I shut the door and, summoning all my courage, I lifted up the valise and put it on the cushion of the seat. At eighteen I knew more about revolutionary ideals than about the science of pyrotechnics, and I was absolutely sure that I had only a few more moments to live. Standing firmly planted before my fatal charge, I waited for the explosion....

After a long time I began to suspect that this strange whistling noise was coming from pipes which heated the train! A little cloud of steam appeared to confirm me in this belief.

What a journey!

The three hours between Tientsin and Peking stretched out like the twelve months of a year.

Thanks to our friend who, always faithful, came to meet me, I was able to go through the foreigners' exit without even showing the slightest emotion. But the strain had been almost too much for me, strong as I was. Once safe within

the rooms where we kept our treasures hidden, I fainted.

What did it matter!

That trip was the last I had to make. From then on we had as many bombs at our disposal as we needed, to begin work.

CHAPTER XXV

A Precious Ally

MEANWHILE the Peking population had been growing hourly more and more uneasy. Almost all the important families had left the city, and with them my grandmother, my mother, and my sister. They had taken refuge in Tientsin. A general uprising, inspired by the revolutionists, was now feared.

This move of my family gave me a good pretext for going to Tientsin as often as it might be necessary in the interests of our party. Detained by his work, my father had remained in Peking. This also facilitated my constant journeyings to and fro, which I accomplished in complete liberty. No one even asked me exactly how I spent my time; no one then was suspicious.

In order to recover more completely from the emotions which I had endured while making my final voyage as bomb and dynamite carrier, I went down to spend two weeks at Tientsin with my mother. She had, of course, noticed that for some time I had not really been myself. Often she had questioned me, but I had never been able to answer her frankly. Now I considered it my

duty to tell her exactly what my life was and what I had undertaken and was trying to accomplish.

I confided to her that I had become a member of the Kwo Ming Tang Society, and that I would follow it and be faithful to it, in life and in death.

Without betraying the profound emotion which such unexpected revelation caused her, my mother very gently asked me if I did not believe that, without going to such extremes, I might render great services to my country. I longed to convince her, to win her over to my point of view. So I told her of our hopes and added that if she saw me ailing it was because I had not taken as great a share as I could have wished in this effort we were making. I was ill because I had not sufficiently served my country.

My mother was for a time plunged in thought. Then finally she said to me:

"My child, do all you can. I will help you!"

My precious mother had suffered so much in her life that she comprehended all. She realised that if she had only been given an opportunity to work as her daughter was now working, her husband would not have been so negligent of her, and her mother-in-law would not have treated her with such cruel disdain.

"You are right," she said to me. "You must help the Chinese women. They have been treated by their families, and by their husbands, as though they were playthings. Not only have they been

prevented from educating themselves, but it has been supposed that they were incapable of learning anything. Show what one Chinese woman is able to do. You will be helping your sisters for all future time. Your work is good. Your decision is wise."

My mother had grown very pale as she pronounced these words. They seemed to remain with me like a benediction.

I was disturbed to see her so troubled, and yet I felt a great sense of relief. I was encouraged and happy again. I had been anxious for a long time lest my family discover my secret. Now I was no longer alone to hide it. I had someone to work with me.

CHAPTER XXVI

Liang Py Must Die

AS I have already said, our Society had several houses in Peking, that near the Tchen Men Gate and others. We were obliged to rent an additional place now, where we could manufacture our bombs.

When all was ready we held a reunion to consider the general situation.

We were quite certain of the fact that the little Emperor, the Regent, and the Imperial Family, lived in fear and trembling. They did not know what step to take next. In reality they were longing to abandon the power and retire from their present position.

The opposition we met came from another source, from a very influential Manchu general, Liang Py, who completely controlled the Manchu Army, then a very considerable force. The opinions of Liang Py were as obstinate as they were detestable. He loathed us with a deadly hatred and he was determined to fight the revolutionists to the end.

We were quite agreed, therefore, that as long as the General exercised his baneful influence in

the North, our whole effort would be paralyzed. He was the stumbling-block, the obstacle to all the progressive measures we wished to inaugurate in China. He had signed his own death-warrant.

It remained for us to choose among our comrades the one to be entrusted with the first of those acts whereby we hoped to free our country from its tyrants. The offers came in great numbers, but it was still impossible for us to fix upon anyone, as we did not know exactly what our plan of action was to be. Great weight had to be attached to the fact that the General, of an extremely distrustful character, was always exceedingly closely guarded.

One night, while we were in the midst of a discussion, one of the young men of our Society, Mr. Pong Gia Chen, asked us to listen to him for a moment.

"I am the person," he said, "obviously designated for this mission. As I am myself an officer in the Army, if I ask the General for an audience he cannot refuse me."

This brought us to a resolution.

We found out exactly the hours at which Liang Py was in the habit of leaving and returning to his house. The time was fixed for the following evening.

In the afternoon, very late, our young volunteer came to join us in the place where we manufactured the bombs. He did not think that the

one bomb which had been given him the previous night was enough; he wanted another. He stayed a long time, talking with us. He was so handsome in his uniform, and so serene. We were sad and downcast, whereas his determination seemed to steady him in a wonderful way.

"We can save our people," he said. "I am convinced of it. If this sacrifice of my life is not enough, others will, I know, follow my example."

We gave him the second bomb, and then he left us.

After saying farewell to him, we did not have the courage to separate. All night we waited and watched together, in agony.

At dawn the news was brought to us. Our friend had accomplished his mission. We wept.

CHAPTER XXVII

The Tragedy

LATER we learned the details of this tragedy.

Liang Py had left his house at about midnight. Somewhat before the time when he was likely to return, our friend had presented himself at the General's door. He explained to the servant who answered his inquiries that he had just arrived from Mukden and was the bearer of a message of great military importance. At this very moment a carriage drove into the inner courtyard. The General alighted. As our friend approached him, Liang Py drew back.

"Who is this man?" he cried. "Who are you?"

"I have an important letter for you," our comrade responded, meanwhile slipping his hand into his pocket as though he were going to take out the message.

An ancient custom in China places before the inner door of every dwelling two dragons carved in stone. With the half-smiling, half-threatening grimaces which have become familiar to all, they

are supposed to drive from the threshold any evil spirits which may approach it.

General Liang Py was standing now by the dragon to the right of the entrance to his house.

Drawing his hand out of the pocket into which he had thrust it, our friend aimed directly at this block of carved granite. The shock of the explosion killed him instantly. The General, mortally wounded, lived for only a few hours.

CHAPTER XXVIII

The Next Victim Chosen

THE results brought about by this astounding act surpassed all that we could have hoped.

At the period of which I am writing the Little Emperor was only six years old. For a long time, his father, the Regent, had placed what little confidence he had left, in one single person—Liang Py. Deprived now of his support and of the leader they had found in this general, the Imperial Family were thrown into utter confusion.

They made a final attempt, however, to save the dynasty. They immediately put in command of the Manchu Army, as successor to Liang Py, Yuan Shi Kai, well known later to the outside world as the first President of the new Republic, to whom the outside world sent accredited diplomats. A Chinaman by birth and race, he had acquired a reputation among his compatriots as an able general and an intrepid soldier. He had begun his official career as Governor of Korea. When the Sino-Japanese War, in which he had played a leading part, was ended, he had taken an openly hostile stand toward the Japanese.

Everyone, the revolutionists included, looked upon Yuan Shi Kai at that time as a patriot.

The rôle of Court Counsellor to the Manchu dynasty was a position of a singularly delicate nature for a pure-blooded Chinaman to assume, all the more so that this particular person had betrayed the former Emperor, Kwang Siou... Yet such was to be the rôle accepted by Yuan Shi Kai. However obstinate a soldier he may have been, however naturally gifted as an organiser, he was not scrupulous enough to withstand the temptations which his new functions offered.

When a young man he had already been received by the Dowager Empress into her military household. Her affection for him had been lasting; he had proved his attachment to her by his disloyalty to Kwang Siou, for whose death, indeed, he had been supposed responsible. Yuan Shi Kai surely was placed in a unique position to serve as adviser to the tottering Manchus. He could easily have persuaded them to adopt the one course which could save them, and with them China. To be obeyed he needed to pronounce but one word: "Abdicate."

Such a step could scarcely have been taken by a Manchu like Liang Py. The retirement of his masters would have meant the end of his own career. Yuan Shi Kai, on the contrary, had no excuse for not serving the ideals of our republican party. A detestable character, he was controlled

entirely by his egoism and his selfish personal interests. And to what sly methods did he not resort in order to play this double-faced part! On the one hand he conversed affectionately with the Manchus; on the other, he was exceedingly friendly with the Revolutionists. For a time we really believed that he was working for our party. In reality, the only end he sought was an arrangement whereby his own ambition might be gratified.

Finally, he made the following cynical statement to us:

"I will force the Manchus to retire from power on one condition: you must make me President of the Republic."

The cold-bloodedness of this proposition scandalized most of the members of the Kwo Ming Tang Society, and the result was that we were in a state of general upheaval and uncertainty, not knowing what to do. The difficulty of communicating with our friends in the South was another serious complication. Yet we felt every day more certain that we must act, and act without delay.

Moreover, with a man like Yuan Shi Kai it was not possible to deliberate. From the moment that we could no longer place our confidence in him, we must prepare to be betrayed. We could not allow his duplicity and his bad faith to strew discord in our midst and to provoke pernicious discussion among our members. He might go so far as actually to disunite our party.

Given all this complicated state of affairs, a solution had to be sought at once. Yuan Shi Kai must share the fate of Liang Py.

We were thoroughly acquainted with his habits. Every morning he went to the Imperial Palace in order to confer with the Regent. We determined to station ten of our members at different places along the streets which Yuan Shi Kai always followed. These ten members were to be armed with bombs. It did not seem possible that he could escape their attacks.

The minute details of this complot were settled. Nothing was neglected or overlooked. Those who were to take an active part in the affair had just left our place of reunion when two of our members from the South were announced. They were Mr. Tsai, Secretary of Public Instruction, now Rector of the Peking University, and Mr. Wang Ching Wei. They had been sent by the Government of Nanking, and they asked to be received at once, as they were bringing from Sun Yat Sen a message of extreme importance which they wished to communicate to us without delay.

We held a second reunion that night which lasted into the early hours of the morning. The decision which Sun Yat Sen had determined upon was overwhelming to us. This is, in substance, what he had charged his Ministers to say:

"The most important for us all is that we re-

main united. No question of personal ambition should retard our action. I am now President of the Republic, but I am ready to resign in favour of Yuan Shi Kai, in the hope that, by such a measure, we may join the North and the South in an indivisible China. Our personal rivalries are of no interest whatever. The great affair is that we should be rid of the Manchus!"

In the midst of our emotion and excitement, as we discussed this great act of patriotism, we suddenly recalled our own preparations, now under way for the following day. Instantly messengers were despatched to recall the ten members of the Kwo Ming Tang who had been appointed to carry out our instructions. Six of them only could be found and the inevitable transpired in consequence.

As Yuan Shi Kai was crossing the avenue which leads to the Imperial Palace several bombs were thrown. One of the horses of his carriage was killed, but he himself escaped unscathed. The lesson, however, was not lost. It was now clear to Yuan Shi Kai that he could not continue his policy of duplicity, but that he must come definitely over to our side.

He accepted the noble sacrifice of the rival whose position he had coveted, and Sun Yat Sen resigned in his favour. Yuan Shi Kai solemnly swore that he would force the Boy Emperor to abdicate, the Regent and the Imperial Family to

withdraw. Though he had no moral sense, he was very superstitious, and he really believed that, as his life had been spared, he was bound now to carry out this promise faithfully. He did not, however, dare to face the Regent himself and ask for the Emperor's signature to an act of abdication. He compromised by sending one of his officials, who succeeded with little difficulty in obtaining what he wanted. This was in February, 1912. As a matter of fact, these last descendants of an expiring régime really asked nothing better than to disappear from a scene where their lives were constantly in danger. The recent attack on Yuan Shi Kai had served to aggravate their impatience.

In as far as this decision regarding Yuan Shi Kai was concerned, our course of action had been determined by the members of our Society who were pacifist by conviction. Among us there was another group to which I belonged. We deplored this too lenient attitude. We thought it could augur no good for the future. We foresaw very clearly that to put Yuan Shi Kai at the head of the Government as President of the Republic, after the many proofs he had given us of his absolutely bad faith, was to mow down the weeds instead of pulling them up by the roots.

CHAPTER XXIX

The South a Dupe of the North

THE Kwo Ming Tang felt very strongly that Yuan Shi Kai should maintain the seat of Government at Nanking where the republicans of the South had established it. There were many reasons to explain our desire for this, all of which had their origin in present events and in past traditions. Politics and history gave us their support. Nanking had been the cradle of the Republic, it is situated midway between Peking and Canton, and it is the ancient capital of China. In 1644, after the suicide of the last descendant of the Chinese Ming dynasty, Peking passed into the tyrannous hands of the Manchu race. Today it remains penetrated by their memory. The traces are everywhere visible of the late Dowager Empress, of her brilliant and domineering personality, her cruel intelligence, her narrow-mindedness which wilfully ignored the outside world, her hatred and fear of foreigners which had plotted the Boxer uprising with its consequent disasters. All these souvenirs created, and even now help to maintain, the vague but unfavourable opinion regarding China which too many people hold.

We believed that the time had come to break off once and for all, by some decisive act, with the former errors perpetrated during the Manchu dynasty. The surest way to meet our aim was to establish the capital at once in Nanking and make that city the seat of the Chinese Republic, North and South henceforward forever united.

Our valued friends, Lee Yu Ying, Wang, and Tsai, with this plan in mind, now came up to Peking to confer with Yuan Shi Kai. They presented their arguments in the name of Sun Yat Sen, whose desire was to see all the revolutionary forces congregated in a single body at Nanking.

Yuan Shi Kai, on this occasion, as on all others, followed his usual policy. He pretended to listen with great interest to this new idea and to approve of it heartily. To be sure, it was not very difficult for a man like him to deceive such fine patriots as Lee, Wang, and Tsai. They were too high-minded to believe that Yuan could be capable of duplicity; but this sly personage had not the slightest intention of leaving Peking. He was already harbouring ambitions which he did not care to expose to the vigilance and criticism of the patriots by whom he would be surrounded in Nanking. Nor was he at all at a loss to find a pretext which made his remaining in the North, in the old Manchu capital, seem a political necessity. He gave his soldiers secretly to understand that pillaging on their part would be tolerated in Peking. Most

of these men were Manchus; they did not wait for the permission to be granted twice before they set to work.

Yuan Shi Kai thereupon despatched post-haste a commission to explain to his political colleagues in Nanking that he was distressed to keep them waiting, but that there were very alarming disturbances which detained him much against his will in Peking. His message read:

"I cannot forsake my army in the present critical state of affairs. If I were to leave now, my departure would undoubtedly be followed by manifestations which might present a veritable danger. Let us be patient."

The Chinese republicans of Nanking were idealists. We were as naive as we were honest. The messengers sent by Yuan Shi Kai were listened to as though they had brought news of some farseeing wisdom...

Thus, a second time, the Government of the South which sought the good of China, and peace, was forced to make a supreme concession to Northern ambition, which was determined to gratify its personal interests even if this meant stirring up discord and causing destruction.

CHAPTER XXX

We Decide to Emigrate

COMPARED with all that we had at first hoped, the results obtained by the Kwo Ming Tang seemed insignificant. We had dreamed of regenerating the entire Government of our country, and we were now forced to accept a compromise, to recognise a temporary President. No doubt he had rid us of the Imperial Family, yet we could not but wonder if perhaps he did not already cherish the secret desire of substituting himself for the former occupants of the Imperial Palace.

This state of affairs was far from meeting with our approval, or from truly satisfying us, yet it had cost us heavy losses. Many of our members, and among them some splendid young men, full of faith in their noble ideals, had perished during the uprisings in the South, not to speak of those who had fallen in Peking during the struggle against our adversary.

The situation did not seem to call now for such a sacrifice of life. Good or bad as he might be, Yuan Shi Kai was installed as President. We

were not strong enough yet to show ourselves more republican than the Head of the Republic!

Such being the situation, we were eager to find a new channel for our energy. We had been a revolutionary society up to this time. Our object, which was to overthrow the Manchu dynasty, had been accomplished. Now we must progress, ourselves.

At a meeting held in Peking in order to determine upon a program for future action, Mr. Lee Yu Ying set forth an admirable plan he had been elaborating.

"The time has passed," he said, "for such brutal, material contention. What our country expects of us now is an intellectual effort. We do not need to go on destroying life. We must devote ourselves to study. We need to broaden our horizon, to acquire new ideas and greater experience. China must be put in touch with modern scientific discoveries. For this there is only one way open to us. We must emigrate to the countries of Western civilisation."

Then this great citizen, who had not hesitated to spend his entire fortune in the pursuit of his dream, told us of the organisation which he was endeavouring to create, with the help of Chinese friends whom he had sent out as a vanguard and who had kept in touch with him by correspondence. Mr. Lee had arranged for the former revo-

lutionists to follow their studies in France, where they could live at the least possible cost.

Instead of encouraging young men to congregate in the large cities, where they would inevitably spend much time together talking Chinese, and where they would meet with all sorts of temptation to amuse themselves and to squander money, Mr. Lee had established his corresponding centres of instruction in the provincial universities, such as, for example, those of Grenoble, Toulouse, Dijon, Montpellier, etc. He had provided facilities for cheap travel, through an agreement with the French Government, and for reasonable board in French homes.

Mr. Lee's plan was greeted with enthusiastic gratitude. Many of our members did not want to wait another day before setting out upon their journey. I would have been only too happy to leave with the first group who embarked at once for France. I felt obliged to curb my enthusiasm. It was my duty, I knew, to make amends to my parents for the hours of anguish which I had caused them, especially my beloved mother. Before leaving her again, I wanted to reassure her, to comfort her, and to make her feel my deep and constant love.

Our Committee, moreover, deemed that my presence was useful in China, and that I could be of assistance to the younger revolutionists who remained at home, unable for one reason or an-

other to follow the westward trail. So I consented to keep in close touch with them, and to help found a newspaper which we called *The Love of Country*.

Yuan Shi Kai was very shortly informed of these new projects. They upset him greatly. Convinced that we were preparing fresh attacks, he surrounded us with spies. These poor hirelings of his could discover nothing suspicious in any of our doings, as we had nothing to hide, but as they wanted to keep their comfortable salaries, they wrote out reports every day concerning our slightest movements.

Yuan Shi Kai was too clever to be deceived for long. Seeing that his scheme of spying on us had failed, he determined to try flattery in order to corrupt us.

I was to be his first victim. He sent me word that the Government wanted to give me a prize because of the way I had pursued my studies. My answer showed the astonishment I felt at such a proposition.

"A prize?" I said. "What for? Because I have done my duty? I don't need a prize for that. If this is a subtle way of offering me money, I beg to recall that my parents are not in need. As for myself, even if I were so poor as to be in positive distress, I would not accept money in exchange for an effort made with the hope of helping my country."

Yuan Shi Kai no doubt found this reply rather arrogant. It did not discourage him. He soon made me a new proposition. This time I was to assume the management of a school which he was planning, to teach women how to weave cloth. I responded to him that, as I was only eighteen, I did not think I had had experience enough to assume such responsibilities.

"I must devote myself to study," I added. "I am soon leaving for Europe."

The firmness with which I refused to accept anything he offered was interpreted by Yuan Shi Kai as an act of open hostility. From this time on he considered me as an enemy. If I was eager to go to Europe, why didn't I start at once? My presence in Peking was something he could not understand and which worried him. He had me watched more closely than ever. I could not take a step in any direction without seeing as many as three spies following close upon my heels.

I did not, however, change any of my habits on this account. I continued, as formerly, to go to the meetings of our ex-revolutionists, with my brother and our friend the diplomat, of whom I have already spoken. Often I addressed the assembly, recalling past deeds, discussing our future line of action. I remember one night I made a declaration something like this:

"It is to the blood shed by our friends that we owe the privilege of being able to continue our

effort. Let us be worthy of their sacrifice. Let us carry on the work started by them as they would have us. What would they wish us to do now? To consecrate our endeavour not to destruction, but to construction!"

Our adversary, Yuan Shi Kai, had an answer ready for me. He was about to put a stop to our efforts to re-establish order by committing a crime.

CHAPTER XXXI

The Murder of Mr. Wou

AMONG the revolutionists for whom I felt the deepest friendship and the most esteem was a young man of a particularly fine spirit and of a frank, loyal character, Mr. Wou. He could not tolerate the duplicity of Yuan Shi Kai. He considered the President a dishonest man. His heart was torn when he saw the way in which our people were being deceived by all the governmental intrigues.

Yuan Shi Kai had been appointed to the Presidency temporarily only. In the spring there were to be new elections to name a permanent President.

Mr. Wou had decided that he would do everything in his power to prevent Yuan Shi Kai from being elected. He prepared a campaign which he hoped to carry on by a series of articles in the most popular newspapers. He met, of course, with the immediate opposition of the censorship which Yuan had established at once, to keep control of the papers.

Mr. Wou was not the sort of man to be discouraged by the first obstacle he met. He re-

solved to print thousands of copies of his articles himself and have them bound in little pamphlets, which would relate the ungarnished truth. He explained, among other things, that it was the President himself who had prompted his soldiers to pillage Peking. Of course, it would not be possible to distribute these pamphlets openly, but Mr. Wou had decided to begin his work in a region more sympathetic to our cause than the capital. He intended to go first to Nanking, carrying with him great numbers of these tracts. From Nanking he planned to circulate through the southern and central parts of China, where he believed that the more ignorant and less informed peasants would profit by this propaganda.

The very day before he was to take the train for Nanking he was assassinated. One of our members came to tell us that the body of our friend had just been found in the canal.

With a few of the members of our old committee I set out in an automobile for the spot where the crime had been committed. We wanted to reach there before the police had time to cover up all trace of the criminals.

The body of our poor friend, Wou, was lying on the ground. It had been stabbed through, eleven times; there were three knives still in the wounds. Near the edge of the canal we picked up a Chinese coat. It was stained with long streaks of blood, as though the murderers had wiped their

knives in the folds of the linen. A visiting card with an address on it fell from one of the coat pockets.

Our first thought was to carry the body of our friend to the place where he had been living. There we learned that for some time past Mr. Wou had received an almost daily visit from a young man who pretended to be a militant revolutionist. On different occasions he had urged Mr. Wou to attend a lunch which he was giving. Too trustful, Mr. Wou had ended by accepting this invitation.

The two young men had set out together for a restaurant situated on the banks of the canal. The day passed and the night followed without Mr. Wou's returning home. A search was made. It resulted in the tragic discovery of which we had been notified before the police.

Unfortunately, at this time our body of police was not sufficiently well organized to conduct a proper inquest. We went first to the place indicated on the card which had fallen from the coat pocket. It was a hotel. The proprietor told us that he remembered having a guest of the name in his house, but that this person had gone without leaving his address.

Among the members of the Government police there were a few fine men upon whom we knew we could rely. We asked them now to help us in our search. They agreed to do so, but they

worked only half-heartedly, or at least so it seemed to me. I felt that life would be unbearable so long as the murderer of our beloved friend had not been arrested and punished.

CHAPTER XXXII

The Motive of the Crime

THE day we discovered the murder of Wou we held a meeting in the evening at the office of our newspaper, *The Love of Country*. We could no longer free ourselves from a fear which haunted us. We were almost sure that among our little group there were several spies.

How they managed to work their way into our midst without our detecting them, we could not stop now to investigate. Our immediate duty was to find out what had led to the murder of Wou. Everyone was asked his opinion. After thinking for a time I offered mine. The conclusions I drew were about as follows:

"There are four reasons which might have prompted this murder: money, jealousy, a family vengeance, politics. We all know what Wou's circumstances were. He was poor. Even supposing that he might momentarily have had a certain sum in his keeping, and that the fact was known, the thief would have tried to find the money in Wou's home, he would not have attacked him at a time when he was sure to

have almost nothing in his pockets. In the same way, who could have been jealous of our friend? He did not occupy a position of any importance, and how did he live? In a temple, with the monks, whose meagre existence he shared. He had no attachment for any woman and, as for believing in a family vengeance, this seemed unreasonable. He had left his native town in the central part of China because all of his family were dead. Jealousy, a desire for vengeance, exist in the heart of one man toward another man. Wou was not murdered by one, but by several men. An attack made by so many knives all used at the same time must mean a political crime."

I added that Wou had showed me the pamphlet he intended circulating widely through the southern and central parts of China. It was quite sufficient to explain the hatred of Yuan Shi Kai.

Some one in the assembly cried out:

"Not at all! Yuan Shi Kai knows as well as we do that no matter how strict the censor is, the newspapers are constantly publishing articles attacking the Government. No one could suppose that he would be so vain as to try to suppress all the journalists who are opposed to him!"

As this interruption seemed to corroborate our anxiety regarding the presence of traitors in our midst, I thought it deserved a very firm response:

"Granted!" I said. "Yuan Shi Kai is too clever to attempt the impossible. But Mr. Wou

had declared publicly that he would tell everything he knew, the whole truth of the situation, as soon as he found himself among our southern friends. They, I am more and more convinced, have a clearer understanding than some among us of what a Republic means. Wou was killed the very day before he was to have set out on this mission."

There was a movement in my favour, and the vote was cast for our investigations to be continued, politics being the admitted motive of the crime.

CHAPTER XXXIII

I Am Sent to Japan

WE did our best to follow up what information was brought us in our melancholy quest, but all without success. We were growing discouraged.

One evening, one of the Government police officers whom we counted on to assist us, appeared suddenly at our house in Peking and asked to see me on a very urgent matter. I thought at first, of course, that he had come to bring some fresh data regarding the murderers of Mr. Wou. Such, however, was not the case. This man, who had always shown a certain devotion to our party, had come to entreat me to leave the city at once. I was suspected of new complots by the followers of Yuan Shi Kai. If I did not leave, my fate would soon be settled. I was to share the destiny of our poor Wou.

The idea of an escape, a hasty flight, was intolerable to me. But this agent did not give me time to reflect. My arrest, my death, could not, he declared, be of the slightest use to our cause. I accepted this argument as convincing, and it was

decided that I was to rejoin my mother for a time in Tientsin.

Oh, how glad she seemed to have me with her again!

I did not tell her that at that very particular moment I was seeking refuge from the assassins who wanted to take my life. Indeed, I forgot about them myself. I felt the wonderful sweetness and peace of our home like a blessed benediction. I was astonished to see that existence went on in the same easy way, made up of a thousand little things which caused the days to slip quickly by. My grandmother insisted upon the usual rigorous etiquette being observed in all the minor ceremonies of our household, just as though nothing had taken place to change the course of events in the history of China!

My sister was as gentle and lovely as ever, occupied with her painting, her music and embroidery, and in looking after the housekeeping. She liked to dress in one of the ancient costumes and to play on her flute the old Chinese songs.

Sometimes when I woke up in the morning, surrounded by this soothing atmosphere, I wondered what part of my life was real, what part a dream....

The excitement and anxiety which I had fancied were left behind in Peking were not long in following me. I received a visit one day from an Englishman who was employed in the Secret Serv-

ice of the British Concession in Tientsin. He had come to give me a friendly warning. He told me that the Government held me under suspicion and that they had ordered him to get all the information he could regarding my present life.

I knew this man and was not at a loss as to how I must answer him.

"Tell the Government," I said, "that I am enjoying a rest in Tientsin. For instance, take today as a sample. Would you like to know how I have spent my time? I have been riding with some of my friends. We had a picnic near the sea. We had our tea under the trees, quite in English fashion, with good bread and butter!"

This agent, being a true Britisher, was very fond of bread and butter. He answered me with a smile.

"I see," said he, "you are merely amusing yourself without doing any harm to anyone."

"I need a diversion," was my reply. "I have been working too hard lately..."

When he got up to leave, this strange caller told me in an offhand way a piece of news that disturbed me far more than his questions had. The police had searched our house in Peking, hoping to find papers or documents of mine. Fortunately, I had burnt everything, but I was none the less overwhelmed because of the effect such a measure might have upon my father.

That very night he arrived in Tientsin. He

seemed weary, disheartened. He demanded that my mother and all the household leave at once for Canton. His intention was, so he announced, to join them there shortly. As for me, he insisted that I should embark on the first ship sailing for Japan.

In all this he made me feel very clearly that it was I, through the rôle I had been playing, who had momentarily compromised his career. My heart ached as I said good-by to him.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Hiding Bombs

I REMAINED four months in Japan, suffering all that time with the galling sensation of being in exile. My surroundings recalled vividly the first visit I had made to this country so near to China in reality, and yet so widely distant from her in thought and in feeling.

The intense strain which I had been through during our recent struggle for freedom seemed to have aged my very soul. My energy was just the same, but it was no longer sustained by a blind, unquestioning enthusiasm. The joy of my first dream had been dulled by the vision of death. I had always before me the image of friends whom I would see no more. The memory of our poor hero Wou rose up like a nightmare, in which I saw his body pierced through with the cruel knife-thrusts.

As I meditated during these long hours of waiting, my hopes turned toward the new effort to which we must devote ourselves. I became more and more convinced that violence may perhaps serve to change radically a political situation, but that it cannot help a whole people to progress.

Mr. Lee Yu Ying was right when he said that henceforth China must open all her doors and windows towards the West. We had lived for too many centuries imprisoned by our own ignorance. Thousands and thousands of Chinese die of hunger every year, in the very midst of the most fertile lands in the world. This is not only because of the indifference or carelessness of our peasants; it is due chiefly to the superstitions by which they have been terrorized. Like their far-distant ancestors, they still believe that the world is peopled by invisible forces which must be propitiated continually and which, if irritated, vent their evil upon man.

In order to adapt the laws of nature to our needs, instead of worshipping them in fear and trembling, our first duty is to change our whole attitude toward life. Experience has proved that the people of Western civilisation protect human life more successfully with their science than we with our superstitions. It is therefore incumbent upon us to adopt their methods, and to realise that it is the privilege of man not to remain the slave of nature, but to become her master.

My time was not all given to meditation during these months of exile. Even under such trying circumstances there were chances to work. Several members of our former committee had left China at the same time I did. They had come to join the pioneer revolutionists who were momen-

tarily living in Japan. To learn as much as we could ourselves, and afterward to help give instruction to the Chinese people, continued to be the end and aim of all our activities. Amongst these friends with whom I found myself in Japan, some were about to embark for San Francisco, others were going as far as New York. My plan was to leave for France, where I hoped to join my comrades, Mr. Wang and Mr. Lee.

I was able to communicate with my mother through a friend who was leaving for Canton and who willingly took a letter. I begged her to come to Tientsin so that I might see her before sailing for France. When at last I was able to return to China, I found her waiting for me. It was a great joy to be united again. My grandmother, too, had come with her, all the way from Canton.

There were many things to do before I could be ready for such a long journey which might keep me away from home for several years. Aside from work, I had sentimental duties to perform. My mother wanted a good portrait of me to keep during my absence. My grandmother was having a veritable trousseau made for me, quite as though I were going to be married! Dear Grandmother! We were too radically different for her to look upon me with absolute approval. The one thing in which we resembled each other was our iron will. It was only thanks

to that, that Grandmother in her heart considered me with an indulgent touch of pride.

Regarding my work, there were still things to be arranged, which were of a delicate and a serious nature.

Several of the bombs which were destined, in case of need, for use of our members, still remained hidden away in the secret place which our European friend had provided for my brother and me. The Government knew that we had these explosives in our possession, but was ignorant of the exact spot in which they were concealed. It was imperative that I should go to Peking for my passport, so I resolved to profit by this chance, while I was in the capital, to hand over to one of the revolutionist comrades for safekeeping these terrible engines of destruction.

Yuan Shi Kai seemed to have read my thoughts. He sent a messenger to me as soon as I arrived in my father's house in Peking. This person, with the most suave and flattering manner, explained to me that the President was aware of the terrible responsibilities I was bearing on my young shoulders. He considered that they were beyond my strength, and he wished to save me if possible.

"For example," said Yuan's envoy, "the bombs and the dynamite? Why should you be obliged to look out for them now? You can turn them over safely to the Secretary of War. Of course

the Government will be more than ready to reward you if you make such a wise decision."

It was necessary to clear this matter up at once. I was, I confess, rather excited as I explained to the man that the Society to which I belonged was not of the sort which takes bribes for its political activities. We were young, all of us, and we acted through conviction in our ideals. No recompense under the sun could tempt us. The only reward we sought was the joy of working for our country.

"These bombs," I added, "and this dynamite, of which you speak, are not my personal property. They belong to our Society. I shall return them to our members. They will make whatever use of them they see fit."

I was all the more irritated because now I understood why Yuan Shi Kai had had our house in Peking searched. He had not been looking for documents. His hopes were quite different; they were fixed on the finding of these bombs.

I realised that I must not wait one hour now before seeking a safe place for these coveted objects.

After the pillaging which had gone on in Peking at Yuan Shi Kai's instigation, when the soldiers helped themselves to what they wanted, while their General settled himself in the Presidency, a great many people, alarmed at the turn of events, had carried their jewels and their fam-

ily treasures to the Legation Quarter. This enclosure is legally considered as foreign territory. Once the walls around the quarter are passed the Chinese police have no power. Within this concession they can exercise no authority.

I made up two parcels; in one I put the dynamite and in the other the bombs. I carried them one evening to our friend in the Legation Quarter; there they were safe and could remain without the Government being able to seize them, until I could give them over to one of our comrades. For the moment this was not possible, as I was too closely watched by Yuan Shi Kai's police.

My passport for Europe was in order now, so I returned to Tientsin.

This was in the month of March, of the year 1913. I had expected to sail at once. But this work, to which I had pledged myself for life and for death, again detained me at the very threshold of my fondest dream.

Informed that my departure was imminent, several deputies who were members of our party came to see me in Tientsin. They wanted to talk over the elections which were to be held in April and which would decide whether Yuan Shi Kai was to be appointed permanent President. All the loyal republicans were expected to stand firmly together in their opposition to Yuan as candidate. The delay for me would be of a month

only. My mother entreated me not to listen to the propositions of these deputies, but to embark at once. Her heart was trembling with anxiety.

"Why wait?" she pleaded. "If you love me, leave now!"

"Why hurry?" my friends insisted. "If you love your country, stay!"

It was to their appeal that I yielded. It was agreed that I should sail the day following the elections.

How much better it would have been for me if I had listened to my mother!

CHAPTER XXXV

Our Enemies Shoot Our Friend

I SHALL always remember with anguish the date of March 21, 1913.

A telegram brought us the news that Sung Tchow Jen, one of the most noble characters and the greatest souls in China, had been assassinated. Called to Peking to fill the important position of Prime Minister, to which he had been appointed by Parliament, he had been shot at the very moment when he was about to board the train in the Shanghai railroad-station. A man had crept up beside him, the report of a pistol was heard, no one had had time to do anything, not even to stop the criminal in his flight. As soon as he had accomplished his deadly work he escaped, while Sung Tchow Jen was carried off in a dying condition.

We reached Shanghai too late to bid farewell forever to this grand republican. We felt as though our party had lost its right arm. We were not only grieved, but troubled; the agitation and sorrow in our hearts seemed to extend to the multitude. The excitement was intense.

All the members of the Kwo Ming Tang who

were still in China came to Shanghai for Sung Tchow's funeral. I had lost a friend. But I could not dwell upon my personal grief when I considered the disaster which had befallen our country. Sung Tchow Jen understood better than anyone the needs of China. His farseeing intelligence, his strong will, his kindness, seemed to open the way to progress. At that time, too, there still remained among certain of the more narrow-minded Chinese men a prejudice against those who had received their education in Europe or America. This leaning toward Western culture was a novelty even among our intellectual élite; it had not yet penetrated the masses, who are still chiefly swayed by the routine of ancient traditions. It was therefore most important that our party should count among its members men who were convinced of the need for modern progress and reforms of all kinds, but who themselves had never been out of China.

Sung Tchow Jen exactly answered all these requirements.

His brilliant mentality had long since grasped and understood the outside world which he had never seen. A true disciple of Confucius, he was at ease with those in the highest positions and he never offended the humblest being. He had adopted as his the precept which our great Master offered his disciples. In speaking of the necessity

for being tactful and of the moral effect which good grace produces in all things, Confucius said:

"Be an honest man, but with taste...Tell the truth, but with taste..."

Sung Tchow Jen had the innate sentiment, or power of intuition, which impels a man to act because he knows the moment is propitious, or warns him to wait because the time is not yet ripe. Thus in losing him, we lost hopes which we were not to see rise again.

As to the direct cause of his death, there was no doubt possible in our minds, nor was it difficult to imagine who had instigated this political crime.

I have already explained why we had thought best to be lenient with Yuan Shi Kai, to be patient, and to abandon our former methods of violence. Sly and ambitious, he had mistaken our moderation for weakness. This crime was the proof of it.

The day after Sung Tchow Jen's burial in Shanghai, we held a meeting. All our members were present. Our indignation had dried our tears and banished all our former feelings of tolerance. We must choose a new policy for our party. When my turn came to speak I appealed to all that some immediate measure be taken which would show that we were determined, united, and strong.

"A few more crimes like this," I said, "and our party will be completely disorganised. The Man-

chus, the old régime will return. Our dead shall have died in vain!"

Everyone felt as I did. Our whole assembly, the leaders, and our friends, voted a measure declaring that without any further hesitation we must retaliate.

CHAPTER XXXVI

We Plan Vengeance

THE detectives who were sent out in search of Sung Tchow Jen's murderer found this wretched assassin. It was proved without doubt that he was an agent of the Peking Government. He was imprisoned, awaiting trial. This outward pretense at justice served only to aggravate our indignation. We longed for reparation. We wanted to finish once and for all with these false republicans who pretended to govern China, who held out one hand to us and with the other struck us.

In this troubled state of mind I left for Tientsin. Young and intense, my friends and I dreamed of starting an uprising, and we had already studied the best methods to employ when a message was received from Sun Yat Sen. Once again he wished to curb our ardor.

With his customary respect for justice, this great man informed us now that we must not under any consideration stir up disorder in Peking.

"Weak people," he said, "are the only ones who act when in anger. We have actually in our

possession all the documents which prove that Yuan Shi Kai is culpable. Why then should we put ourselves in the wrong by applying personally the punishment he so well deserves? In all the trials through which we are at present passing, the most precious ally we have is public opinion. We must not try to startle the people, but rather to win them over to our way of thinking. Let us use, but not abuse, our rights. We are in a position to have Yuan Shi Kai tried before a Supreme Court. Let us call him to account. As President of the Republic he has, from egotistical motives, of a purely political nature, ordered a murder to be committed. If we plan to accuse him, as soon as he finds it out he will resign rather than face the condemnation and ruin awaiting him."

I was among those whom this opinion impressed. But Sun Yat Sen's theory was far from obtaining the unanimous approval of all the members of our Society. It was objected that Yuan Shi Kai would scorn our legal procedures and that, knowing he was the master of the situation, he would hold out to the end.

Sun Yat Sen had been willing to give Yuan Shi Kai the benefit of the doubt, and to suppose that his conscience might be roused. He was not, however, blind as to Yuan's personal dishonesty, and he well knew that he might by some new intrigue avoid our attempts to establish the truth. In such an extremity he admitted that we should have re-

course to violence; even, if necessary, to a war which would bring the North and the South into conflict. He was not alarmed at such a possibility. He knew that Yuan Shi Kai no longer had an army to call upon. The Manchu soldiers hated the general who had betrayed all his old friends and who had taken the place of the former reigning family. They knew, moreover, that the President's treasury was empty. He had spent the last cent in bribes. The only thing now to replenish his coffers was for Yuan Shi Kai to launch a public loan.

It was against this final expedient that all our endeavours should be directed. The loan must be a failure. Without money, Yuan would be paralyzed.

CHAPTER XXXVII

Learning Is Honoured in China

WHEN the President learned of our summons, he merely shrugged his shoulders. We could not have expected anything else from a man of his base character. I had been among those who had not placed much hope in an appeal to his conscience. Yet when we were officially informed of his ironical scorn, I could not refrain from tears.

Yuan Shi Kai did not satisfy himself by merely showing disdain; he tried to outdo us. At the same time we learned of his refusal, we heard also that the loan upon which he counted had been organised, and that it would be launched within five days.

The trial which we intended to hold eventually, in any case, could not begin without our previously observing certain formalities. They would drag on for two or three weeks. In this way we would be beaten. Once the money had poured into Yuan Shi Kai's hands he would be the master of the entire situation, and the hopes of China would be wrecked.

There was no way out of it except through violence.

Foreigners must not be astonished that at such a time our Chinese people should have been so easily deceived. Our political opinions had, of course, evolved more rapidly than theirs. They were put in touch very slowly with the most important current events; the newspapers, which have a very limited circulation, are read only by an élite. In order merely to learn the thousands of characters which a Chinese writer uses in the simplest composition, it is necessary to study reading for sixteen years. A boy spends all his time at school merely learning to read and write. In the face of such difficulties, the majority of our four hundred millions of inhabitants limit their knowledge to the spoken, not the written language. They do not even try to comprehend the classic forms of Confucius who, in literature, as well as in philosophy, is our great Master.

Does this mean that in China we are indifferent to learning? Not at all. Learning is the basis of our whole social system, which is profoundly democratic in its very essentials. For centuries past Peking has been the centre of competitive examinations. Every year, from the far ends of China, an army of candidates assemble. These students, themselves already forming an élite, have been chosen at the rate of one out of every ten thousand scholars who have passed prelimi-

nary examinations in the different provinces. Thus, in order merely to have the right to take part in the final competition in Peking, the candidates must have shown themselves superior to a myriad rivals.

The final examinations are passed in a way similar to those at the French Beaux-Arts; they take place *"en loge."* The student remains, day and night, locked up in a sort of cell, built for the purpose, and which he cannot leave until he has answered in writing the questions given him. Most of the competitors are, of course, young, but among them there are always some old men. Every year the tremendous strain of such an effort makes its victims. When, at the end of a certain time, the doors of the *loges*, or stalls, are opened, sometimes a venerable head is seen bowed forever over an open book; a hand stiffened in death has paused with brush uplifted to trace some sentence which will never be written. It is from the successful laureates that for generations all Chinese officials have been recruited.

As soon as the Republic was established, we started in our schools and in the Peking University courses all the subjects taught in Europe. Up to that relatively recent time the Chinese had contented themselves with learning about their own country only. Young and old, the students in China are scattered throughout the land. There is not a small town, or even a village, where

one does not find some cultivated man who gives his time willingly to reading aloud to the illiterate, or to merely relating to them the news of the day. The crowd gathers around him, in some park, or public market-place, to listen and to be, of course, more or less influenced by the personal opinions of this story-teller who cannot but give his own interpretation to current events.

At the time of which I am writing the Chinese people, to a man, were thoroughly informed as to the character and significance of the republican doctrine. They had endorsed it, and they were glad to have a President at the head of the Government, but it was altogether impossible for them to know just what use the President was making of his authority. We were obliged to take this fact into consideration and to make all due allowance for the unavoidable ignorance of the masses.

Ever since Yuan Shi Kai had actually been established as Executive in Peking (for over a year and a half), there had been no use made of dynamite. After this period of tranquillity the effect of a bomb would be all the more startling.

We were all agreed as to this question, but it seemed to us as though we had not really advanced at all on the lines of progress we wanted to follow. This melancholy impression amounted to actual desolation when we were forced to admit that we must now ask for fresh volunteers to sacrifice their lives.

Many of the members were for attacking Yuan Shi Kai directly. He was the guilty one. Why always spare him?

I sided with the more moderate group who opposed the execution of the President. If we made Yuan Shi Kai our victim the people would not understand the motives which had prompted such an act. In the eyes of the masses we would seem to be demolishing the Republic itself. Public opinion would condemn us. On the contrary, we knew that the loan, as it was about to be launched by the Secretary of the Treasury, was popularly considered as an offensive sort of autocracy, which displeased the masses. It was the Secretary of the Treasury whom we must try to reach before he was able to attain his object. Any attack made upon him personally would correspond to the feelings of the majority. Subsequent to such an intervention, Yuan Shi Kai, penniless, would be obliged to appear in Court. His condemnation would be a logical consequence.

I was exceedingly impressed by one thing—it seemed practically impossible to approach the President, strictly guarded as he always was. Aside from any moral consideration which might deter us, I pleaded that our Society should not expose itself to failure.

"What impression," I asked, "shall we make throughout the country if, after this prolonged hesitation, we then try to kill Yuan Shi Kai and

fail? If, after that, we turn our violence in still another direction, we shall acquire the reputation of being both savage and weak."

My argument had little effect. We continued to discuss the situation feverishly. The volunteers who offered themselves all wanted to dispose of Yuan, and Yuan only.

I could not deliberate any longer. I declared that, acting as my convictions compelled me, I would make the attack myself.

It was decided I must set out at once for Peking with the necessary bombs.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

For the Good of the People

AT this critical point we could not take too many precautions about keeping our intentions secret. We planned, therefore, to envelop in mystery the journey that lay before me, between Tientsin and Peking. It would perhaps be the last I should ever make. The most minute details were consequently discussed and arranged for with my friends. It was decided that I should travel with a young Chinese woman, disguised as a peasant.

Among our members there was one whom I had known since childhood. She had not thrown herself into the mêlée with the same ruthless ardor as I, but on several occasions she had given proof of her courage and rendered unquestionable service to our party. Her family owned a property in the neighbourhood of Tientsin. Her brother was employed in the service of the Department of War. Owing to this fact, it was natural that she should come and go frequently always on the road between her parents' country place and the capital. On these trips she was generally accompanied by one of the peasants who

worked on the estate. I was to be dressed in the costume of a woman of the people, and to get into the train at the same time my friend did. In this way, we hoped I would arouse no suspicion. My arrival in Peking, in this disguise, would pass unperceived, and once there I could slip away through the crowd which was always loitering about the station.

This Chinese crowd is forever on the move; it throngs the streets and the public squares of our cities and it keeps the principal avenues in a constant state of animation, and is a source of astonishment to foreigners who visit China. It seems as though our people could not be happy at home, as though they had to walk, or run, to call out and converse, to discuss and haggle, and even to eat in the streets, always with perfect good-humour. Indeed, the patience and the gaiety of our masses are seldom disturbed by "fights" which so often occur in Western countries. Occasionally some cruel injustice wrings a complaint from the sufferer. But even then the incident transpires as though it were being enacted upon the stage. As the Justice of the Peace is an unknown personage in Chinese officialdom, the injured citizen makes his complaint directly to the police, in the street. The case is plead and judged in the open air, after due interrogation on the one hand, and contradictory discussion on the other, in which the onlookers take their liberal share, giving their opinion

freely on the subject of justice—or injustice—in general, and on this especial point in particular.

I believed I could take advantage of this swarming, seething crowd, which does not leave the streets until long past midnight, to wend my way unperceived through the thoroughfares of Peking.

Just a short time before our express was to start, my friend brought me the peasant's clothes which I was to wear. I did my hair in two braids which hung down my back. This was a complete change for me. My forehead was uncovered and I was really not recognisable to anyone in the habit of seeing me with a European hat. The rest of my costume was composed of a pair of linen trousers, a blue linen blouse which fell over my hips. Under this blouse I wore a belt. In the belt I hid my dynamite. The bombs were packed in my valise.

It was quite natural that my friend's brother should come to the station to meet her, and that, as he held an official position, he should spare his sister and the servant who accompanied her the usual Customs inspection.

In the train my friend travelled first-class. I was in the second-class, as there is no third on the fast expresses. So I had several hours to reflect quietly by myself.

They say that a man who is drowning lives over his entire past in a few seconds. It seemed more

than probable that I should be called upon to act perhaps that very night, in any case, within twenty-four hours, and that this was consequently the last day of my life. A strange sort of exaltation seemed to lift me above all personal considerations as to my own fate. I thought of my country which I loved above everything in the world. My duty was clear to me.

The beautiful story of Moulan, which my mother had told me when I was a child, came back to my mind. Every detail seemed to stand out in my memory. I could not but feel envious of this Chinese girl who had risked her life for the father she adored—she had parted from him with his blessing upon her; his gratitude followed her in this sacrifice she was making. Between my father and me there was not this close intimacy. We were separated by all the wide distance that lies between two generations in China, which are not only different but actually opposed to each other.

The high official position which my father had held in the days of the Manchus was that of Counsellor to the State Department, or somewhat similar to that, in European countries, of Minister Plenipotentiary. In China—as elsewhere, I imagine—such places are given to men who keep themselves aloof from current politics, and whose experience and technical knowledge make their position an established one.

Yuan Shi Kai, when he assumed his duties as

President, had been eager to retain in his entourage men like my father, who formed an élite. But my father, with the fall of the Manchus, had withdrawn from active public life. Chinese in heart and soul, he yet would not have lifted a finger to hasten the downfall of the old régime. He believed in modifying the former autocracy. He and those who shared his convictions, formed a Society, conservative in principle, which favoured a constitutional Chinese monarchy.

I suffered at this sort of diplomatic prudence, this official wisdom which thinks that progress always advances quickly enough, and that a nation evolves inevitably, and that matters should never be precipitated by violence.

The feeling of respect which I owed my father was too profound to permit of my discussing with him the questions which were nearest my heart. Yet, as I looked from the car window now at the landscape passing swiftly before my eyes, I recalled one occasion when there had been a cruel clash in our points of view. One day, in speaking of the Manchus, he had used the expression "our masters—our former masters."

My eyes had flashed back what was in my mind, and I had exclaimed:

"Our masters?...Never! Our oppressors? ....Yes!"

Now I was preparing to sacrifice my life to prevent, if possible, these "oppressors" from ever re-

turning to power. My will was strong, but I could not help feeling very lonely. I comforted myself with a thought which often recurred to me —it was not for our family that I was working, but for all of China, for our magnificent people, so brave and so miserable.

More than once during the severe Peking winters, when Tung Ur had driven me back to the house in my ricksha after some meeting of our members which had lasted till dawn, we had seen by the wayside, huddled against the wall, his frozen body stiffened forever in death, some poor coolie who had fallen asleep never to wake again. His thin cotton clothes had ill protected him against the deadly chill of night, and now they seemed to envelop him like a shroud. The face was drawn with hunger.

Yet these men were labourers! Their muscles, in spite of their emaciated condition, showed how constantly they must have worked, and they had not earned enough in return to protect them from such a tragic fate....

"Such martyrs," I said to myself, "can only be accounted for by a social system wherein a privileged few impose upon the masses."

And then I thought of the unlimited riches of our country. Such a wonderful effort sustained by the humblest deserved a fairer reward than this anonymous death agony which passed unnoticed during the dark hours of a bitter night.

Some new method must and would be found whereby greater comfort, both moral and material, could be spread throughout our beloved country.

With this conviction in my mind, the sacrifice of my life seemed a privilege. What difference did it make that my days should be brief, if only the existence of the Chinese people could be bettered?

CHAPTER XXXIX

Dynamite

WHEN we reached the Peking station, I was met by the friend whose parents owned a large property near Tientsin, upon which I was supposedly one of the farm girls. He put me in a ricksha with my valise in front of me. I touched my belt to see if my dynamite cartridges were still there. Everything was safe. I could not, however, rid myself of an unpleasant, harassing impression which wore on my nerves.

In the corridor of the train I had noticed during the journey a man who seemed to me suspicious. I saw him without looking at him. I felt him there and his presence was oppressive. Once only did his eyes and mine meet. He had a cigarette in his mouth, and I saw him through a cloud of smoke. Yet his glance seemed fixed upon me as though I were a prey.

As soon as we reached Peking this man hurried out of the station. As he passed on quickly he was saluted by four Chinese men. I felt instinctively that this formal greeting was a signal.

In addition to this, I was now arriving in Peking under entirely new circumstances to any I had

previously known. I had not wanted to impose upon the kind devotion of the European diplomat of whom I have often spoken, and who was such a reliable friend. I knew that if I had asked him, he would have come, as usual, to meet me at the train, but this would have attracted attention, as I was in peasant costume. For the same reason it would have been imprudent for me to go at once upon arriving to the place where we had so often taken refuge. This adventure upon which I had now embarked must not, I felt, expose the life of another, nor his honour.

I again assured myself that the cartridges were safe in my belt, and then gave the human pony who was pulling my ricksha the address of a restaurant where he was to take me in Ha Ta Men Avenue. This inn was a favourite meeting-place for the revolutionists. The proprietor and the servants had always shown a discreet sympathy with our cause. I was sure, no matter what the hour, to find some of our members there, probably on the lookout for me, and who would be able to give me my orders.

As soon as my ricksha was under way and I knew that we had left the railroad-station well behind us, I turned around as though to arrange the braids which hung down my back. A glance brought relief. It was evident that my anxiety during the journey had been purely nervous. No one was following me—at least, so I believed.

CHAPTER XL

Must I Die, Too?

PEKING, as those who know it will remember, is divided into several cities which have their own particular character, not only as to exterior appearance, but as to their inhabitants, and these towns within a town are separated one from another by high walls.

Near the railroad station the Legation Quarter presents a very distinguished variety of international architecture. This is the part of Peking reserved for the official residences of the European representatives, each one of whom is installed in his own particular enclosure. The roofs of the Legations, those of the less important houses occupied by the counsellors, the secretaries, and the various minor members of the diplomatic corps, extend beyond the surrounding walls, the doors of which are guarded night and day by sentinels wearing the uniforms of the different armies of the world.

In striking contrast to this semi-citadel is the Chinese or Tartar city, which in turn shelters in its very heart the ancient imperial capital now falling to ruins—its walls, its pavilions, its pagodas,

its magnificent palaces, crumbling to dust. The dwellings, long since abandoned by their noble inmates, stand as though gazing with astonishment upon the outside world through windows from which the glass has long since fallen. The marble bridges, the paved courtyards, the tiled roofs, clearcut in lines of grace against the Peking sky,—all this beauty has been conceived and created by the minds and the hands of the Chinese. Even these ruins are an expression of harmony which may be taken as a symbol of the very soul of our country. The Manchus, in their flight, have abandoned all that formed the frame and the shelter for the power which they had usurped. The fundamental basis still remains upon which we can build for the future.

The grave preoccupations which I now faced did not so possess my mind that I could not enjoy as I saw again this vision of beauty. It comforted me, and in the same way I enjoyed this drive in the fresh cold air through the crowd which is always swarming in the interminable Ha Ta Men Avenue, one of our broadest boulevards. Memories, not so long distant, of my childhood seemed to rise upon the way. For an instant I longed to live.

CHAPTER XLI

The Loyal Servant

MY coolie stopped finally before the entrance of the restaurant. Before getting out of the ricksha I gave another look about me to be sure no one had followed me.

Like all our Chinese houses, this inn was separated from the street by an inner courtyard. The passage, or alley, leading to it was long and winding, and on this November afternoon already dark. I entered the lower floor, which was reserved for the kitchens and pantries. Everyone was busy preparing for dinner. The public and private dining-rooms were on the first floor. I went up the narrow staircase, and in the hall above I met one of the waiters. He recognized me, in spite of my disguise. Without speaking a word, he led me to a room which opened on a second courtyard. There I was welcomed by three of the revolutionists, who were waiting for me.

I showed them my valise.

"Everything is ready," I said. "You need only tell me what is expected of me."

They explained that our associates in the South

had given their hearty approval to our plan of action. Indeed, a number of volunteers had offered to take my place. I was infinitely touched by this generous proposition. I could not accept it.

"To offer your life spontaneously for a cause," I said, "is an act which concerns only your own conscience. To take someone's else place in making such a sacrifice would be a purely personal, not a patriotic matter."

My friends did not let me finish.

"These young volunteers of whom we speak," they declared, "are as fanatical, as ardent lovers of their duty as we are. There is, however, a difference between them and you. They can give only their lives to the cause. By dying for it they will render the only real service of which they are capable, whereas your presence among us is indispensable. We need your ideas, your thoughts, far more than the sacrifice of your life."

Deeply moved by what these comrades said, I was about to answer when the door was thrust suddenly open. The servant whom I had met in the hall rushed in. He seemed in a terrible state of excitement. He came over to where I was, and spoke in a very low tone, as though he were afraid of being overheard.

"Excuse me, Miss," he said, "but I have something very important to say to you."

His voice shook with emotion.

"What is it?" I asked.

"There are two men downstairs," he whispered, "two Secret Service agents. They are after you. They recognized you at the railroad-station and they followed you. They have sent me up to find out if you are really Miss Tcheng. One of the men declares he has already followed you several times from Shanghai to Tientsin. He offers me $700 and a good job in the Government if I can find out for sure, in spite of your disguise, that you are really the person they want. They swear that you are a revolutionist and that you are carrying dynamite on your person."

As he said this, the poor fellow began to tremble. His sympathy for our republican ideals was not quite ardent enough to make him care to play a part in the present drama. That was evident. He added a final comment to his remarks.

"Oh, Miss," he said, with an accent of pity which touched me profoundly, "if your father knew this, what a disgrace for him!"

I thanked him for his loyalty in warning me about the two men downstairs.

There was no time for discussion. I realised that I must act without losing a moment. I asked this servant to get me a ricksha. I ran into an adjoining room and dressed as quickly as possible. I had put some European clothes in my valise. I undid my braids, re-arranged my hair; I put on a pair of high-heeled slippers such as I

wore with evening dress; I threw over my shoulders a long cloak, and pulled well down on my forehead a soft velvet toque. This hasty toilet was scarcely finished and my valise shut again when the poor "boy" came back to tell me that the ricksha was waiting.

My one desire was to gain time. With a start but of a minute or two, I might have a chance of escape. I counted on the change of costume bewildering the policemen, if only at the first glance. Not knowing, of course, that I had been informed of their presence, they would try to keep me from discovering that I was being followed.

To the loyal servant I gave the following explanation:

"Tell these men that you have listened at the door to our conversation, that you have overheard me say that I was going to join some of our comrades in the Tchen Men."

It was on this false information that I based all my hopes of getting away from Yuan Shi Kai's secret agents. They could not suppose that this hotel waiter had informed me as to their presence and their suspicions. I counted on the fact that, having found out supposedly what they wanted to know about my movements, they would not commit the professional error of trying to arrest me on the spot, but would content themselves with following me in the hope of rounding

me up with the group of revolutionists they thought I was about to join.

It seemed to me that I should never be able to get down that narrow staircase!

As I passed along the hall my knees were shaking under me. Through the window I could see the winter sky. It was tinged with pink, the pink of the Peking twilight. In the courtyard the lanterns were already lighted. They were swaying back and forth in the November wind. All this seemed infinitely sad.

The hotel had only one entrance, so I had to go out by the same door on the Ha Ta Men Avenue by which I had come in. The two men were on the lookout. The instant they caught sight of me, they shrank back into the shadows. They had recognized me, evidently, but they did not want me to see them, as they supposed they could follow me unperceived; more than this, they were perhaps afraid, these faint-hearted agents of Yuan Shi Kai. They knew I had bombs on my person, or in my valise. They did not doubt that I would make use of the dynamite if I felt that escape was impossible, and they had no desire to end their lives with me in an explosion. They were satisfied, consequently, to follow me at a distance. One of them was in a ricksha, the other was on a bicycle.

My coolie ran like the wind. I had told him to take me to the Tchen Men. The shortest way

from the Ha Ta Men to the Tchen Men is through the Legation Quarter. The police following me would therefore find it natural that I should traverse the Legation Quarter. Once there I would of course go no further. They could not touch me, as this part of Peking, inhabited by the members of the foreign Legations, is neutral territory, wherein the Chinese Government and its police have no authority. Other agents whom the police had scattered on this interminable avenue joined in the pursuit. We went faster and faster. They followed always at a discreet distance. The race lasted for about twelve minutes. It seemed a lifetime.

At last we turned sharply through the wall of the Legation Quarter. My pursuers even then did not rush forward to seize me, as they might have done in defiance of international laws; they were deterred by the fear that my bombs might cost them their lives.

I paid my coolie as we drew up before the entrance of the Hotel des Wagon-Lits. I went into the big hall, outwardly calm, and with the air of a guest who is an habituée. I sat down at one of the tables. There were a lot of English people taking their tea. The life of leisure and luxury was going on unchanged. . .

How many times, in that same hall, I had come for tea myself with my European friends! What

had I in common now with the Soumay of those days? I felt a thousand years old.

A few moments later, I caught sight of the two men who had followed me. They were standing outside the big entrance door. Always in fear of sudden death, they nevertheless wanted to make sure where I was. When they heard me ask at the hotel office for a quiet room on the second floor I saw them start away just as I got into the elevator.

CHAPTER XLII

Gaining Time

THE Hotel des Wagon-Lits at Peking is a kind of international club where the most diverse sorts of foreign customs are taken quite as a matter of course. At eight in the morning a substantial American breakfast is served; at noon the menu is French; at four o'clock the big hall becomes a tea-room where one might easily be in London. People assemble here to chat or dance, to amuse themselves or to discuss business, and among the tables the merchants with their bric-à-brac, their embroideries, their snuff-boxes, their paintings, circulate with everything which they hope may attract the foreigners. Our art, it must be confessed, is a dangerous rival even for diplomacy in China.

Ever since the Boxer War certain unpleasant memories have continued to hover in the air and to rise up as a cause of embarrassment even in the most superficial relationships. Moreover, the revolution which we had launched, the subsequent fall of the Manchu dynasty, and the general uncertainty consequent upon such fundamental upheavals, have made it wiser for diplomats to form

no very decided opinion about Chinese politics. Nothing, on the contrary, prevents them from passionately devoting themselves to the worship of Chinese art, which has continued its harmonious evolution in spite of the rise and fall of monarchs.

So the foreigners who are passing through Peking, and who long to find out in this personal contact with us, if not our nation's secrets, at least certain information regarding the political situation, soon perceive that the diplomat by whom they are received, whatever his nationality, has only one preoccupation—to show his "collection," to talk about his treasures. Often, as soon as the meal he has offered is finished, at the same time when coffee and cigarettes are served, the door is thrown open and the most renowned dealers of the town enter. From the folds of their long robes they draw out, one a rare pearl, another a crystal of extraordinary purity, or a bit of jade rare in colour. These merchants of past glory are clever psychologists. They know that tea-time is a favourable hour for setting their nets.

I rejoiced to think that, thanks to this usual pastime, I should be able to dress for dinner, which is a ceremonious affair in this fashionable place. The doors of the dining-room open at eight o'clock, and one sees the menservants, the Chinese "boys," gliding about silently in their black silk slippers, the ends of which turn up in

the air to chase away evil spirits, the snowy whiteness of their stockings, the pretty pastel blue of their long linen blouses making a most diverting contrast with the brilliance of the European toilets, the *décolletées* dresses of the women, and the dress-coats of the men.

When I reached my room I was almost afraid to be alone. Ever since I had left Tientsin I had not found a moment to collect my thoughts and deliberate on what I should do. Events had driven me hither and thither, as the autumn wind a leaf, yet I did not want to reflect, I wanted to act.

I put my valise in the closet of my room. I unfastened my belt and tucked it away in a drawer, with the dynamite still in the pockets. Then I rang for the "boy."

In our hotels all the service is done by men. Women in China are not yet sufficiently emancipated to do work of any sort as servants outside of the families to which for generations their people have been attached almost as slaves.

My ring brought the valet who had charge of our floor. During the two years which my brother and I frequented this hotel, I had come to know this "boy" and many of his comrades, so I could call upon him without fear of rousing unnecessary curiosity.

It is difficult for foreigners to realise the sort of devotion of which these humble people are

capable in China. The faithful Tung Ur, whom I have so often and so affectionately mentioned in these pages, is married and the father of a son. But, on all occasions, the most insignificant as the most serious, he thinks of our family before he does of his own.

I explained to the servant who answered my call that my baggage was still at the station, that I wanted to dine downstairs, and that I must have an evening-dress. I asked him to go as quickly as possible to Morrison Avenue, in the Legation Quarter, where he could find what I wished in one of the big stores which the English open wherever they go, and where you can buy everything, from a golf-stick to a ball gown.

He had no sooner left me than it seemed as though the time were dragging with an intolerable slowness. I imagined all sorts of intrigues which were about to rise up and defeat our plans. The fact that the police had found me out, that they had watched me with a persistence from which I had not been able to escape, paralysed me. I reproached myself bitterly for not having been clever enough to deceive these hirelings of Yuan Shi Kai, but admitting that momentarily I was unable to serve our party, at least the dynamite was there to continue the work of deliverance for which we counted upon it. I was startled from these reflections by a sudden rapping at the

door. It was the hotel clerk to explain that someone was calling me on the telephone.

The telephone booth was on the ground floor, near the office of the hotel. I hurried down, and I confess my hand trembled as I took the receiver. Who would answer my "Hallo!" Friend or foe?

Someone spoke in English and I recognised the voice of a revolutionary friend. He did not use Chinese lest the telephone "boys" might intercept our conversation. He had information to communicate and orders to transmit. He told me that both the gates of the Legation Quarter were being guarded by Secret Service agents. The slightest effort to escape now would be disastrous. It would compromise our whole plan of action. All of this was explained very cleverly in terms that were comprehensible only to the initiated. Any outsider would have supposed that we were talking about a worldly function which had been postponed for some insignificant reason.

"What about the candy you brought with you in your valise?" my friend asked. "It will be stale if kept too long. Hai?"

"Can you come here for it?" I asked.

"I'll come at once," he answered. "You will find me at the side door of the hotel, which opens at the end of the long corridor."

I hurried back to my room. I made a parcel of the dynamite. I took the bombs out of the valise and wrapped them up carefully. They were so

small, so insignificant, in comparison with all the good and all the harm we hoped they might accomplish!

When I went to the side door about ten minutes later, my friend was there. His ricksha was drawn up by the curb. He was walking back and forth. We exchanged a few banal words, and he left me, carrying with him the precious charge.

My heart seemed torn in two. Fate was forcing me to sever all the bonds which held me to my dearest friends. I could do nothing. I was powerless. I must consent to live without seeing my comrades, without hearing from them, and without even knowing what was to be the next move.

On the bed where, a moment before, I had tied up the dynamite, I now saw my new gown. They say that a woman remembers all the dresses she has ever worn. In spite of my emotion, I must confess that, although I was to put this one on only once in my life, I found this toilet very becoming. I arranged my hair with a certain coquetry, and I finally entered the dining-room as eight was striking.

How many lives I had lived since eight o'clock that morning!

Seated at the tables there were the same people that one always meets in this fashionable restaurant at the dinner hour: couples of all nationalities, Chinese people in European costume, tour-

ists, regular habitués who had brought their friends with them. I knew many of them, and I concluded from the way they greeted me that this trying day had not left any outward and visible marks.

I found the dinner excellent. I chatted with friends at the next table, an American couple whose son, a boy about twelve years old, had a passion for Pekingese dogs. Some of the old palace servants had given him a puppy. In the days of the Dowager Empress dogs bred at the palace had been famous. When full grown they were so tiny as to be able to nestle comfortably in a Chinese slipper, but, like everything at the palace, they had degenerated. The young pup which enchanted my little American friend could scarcely have got into one of the boots of the avenging gods which stand before the temple doors.

Talking on thus idly I came, as it were, back to life. I began to wonder if it were really I—the person I saw reflected in the glass, dressed in a strange gown, eating heartily, and dissertating on Pekingese dogs.

But if the guests of the Wagon-Lits Hotel little dreamed of all the turmoil within my heart, there were others who had forgotten nothing.

As I was enjoying the bonbons and cakes served at the end of dinner, a card was brought to me. Someone had called, and was waiting to see me. I read the name: *Mr. Chin.*

I knew this Mr. Chin. He had been a revolutionist in the early days, one of those weak characters who had succumbed to the bribes offered by Yuan Shi Kai. He had deserted us, and was now in the service of our enemy.

CHAPTER XLIII

I Am Asked to Fix My Price

I FOUND Mr. Chin waiting for me in one of the smaller parlours. I did not know what he was going to say to me, but I determined that, whatever it was, I should maintain an attitude of polite indifference. After the usual Chinese exchange of banal greetings, I asked him to what I owed the honour of his visit.

He appeared rather embarrassed at this question.

"Would you believe it, Miss Tcheng?" he answered. "It was the police who informed us of your arrival in Peking."

I shrugged my shoulders.

"Do you find the news so thrilling?" I asked, as though I were surprised myself.

"We were notified," he went on, "that you were carrying explosives . . . bombs . . ."

I was playing with a fan I held in my hands. My dress had a long train, and I imagined that I looked like any woman of the world. Glancing very squarely at Mr. Chin, I waited a moment as much as to say: "Do I really seem to be a person who is carrying bombs?"

His embarrassment was becoming more and more pronounced. He summoned all his courage, and without stopping for breath, he made the following statement:

"If I am here tonight, Miss Tcheng, it is to offer you the protection you surely need. You were followed from Tientsin. This you cannot ignore. The President has been informed of the reasons which brought you here. He knows that you are a girl of deep feelings. He admires your splendidly patriotic spirit, but he considers—and he is quite right—that you have been misled by pernicious influences. He would be glad to see you, to talk with you. Indeed, he has a proposition to make to you which may be very far-reaching in its influences, not only upon your personal career, but for the good of the country."

I pretended to listen to him indifferently. In reality I was stirred to the depths with indignation at this open treachery, which not only was laying a trap for me, but which was endeavouring to force me into it, and by what means? But I remained faithful to the promise I had made myself, and I answered very simply:

"The President's agents are overzealous. I have come to Peking to get my passport, as I am about to leave for Europe."

Mr. Chin shook his head. "No," he said, "don't think you can mislead us by such statements. Listen to me. What is it you want to do

for your country? Serve it, of course. How can you do this if you don't appeal to its chief, the President who governs it? He alone can assure your success, not to speak of the reward which you so well deserve."

"Tell me what you mean," I said, trying to appear very natural. "Explain to me in what way I can be most useful to China?"

He then set forth in detail Yuan Shi Kai's intentions as far as I was concerned. I was to put myself wholly in the hands of the Government, to give myself up as a sort of hostage. Then the President was to enter into negotiations with our southern members. A committee would be appointed to examine the conduct and proceedings of the Secretary of the Treasury. If he were proved guilty he would be judged at Tientsin. But, at this same time—such was the bargain exacted by Yuan Shi Kai—Sun Yat Sen was to appear in the Peking courts to give an account of himself and to explain how it was that he had sent me to the capital charged with the mission I had undertaken.

"Thus," Mr. Chin concluded, "you can pose as an interesting victim. Your reputation will be saved."

"Of course," I answered, with as much sincerity as I could affect. "Of course, I am very particular about my reputation."

But Mr. Chin was indefatigable. He stopped a moment as though to add weight to his words.

"Fix your price," he said. "The money will be yours."

"May I telephone you tomorrow?" I asked.

We decided upon the hour—at about five o'clock—and the place where I could communicate with him the next day.

I was thus able to gain time for what I wanted to do.

Mr. Chin and I parted, both quite delighted with the result of our conversation.

CHAPTER XLIV

The Tientsin Express

IT was clear to me now that I must not linger in Peking. I must be out of the capital before the hour when I had promised to telephone Mr. Chin.

The next morning, as I went down for early breakfast, I noticed in the hotel corridor, among the "boys" who usually sit on a bench near the office, a new recruit whom I had never seen before. He did not wear the blue linen uniform of the hotel, but was dressed in grey. I acted as though I had not seen him, but it was not difficult to imagine why he was there. The head "bell-boy" we had always known to be an enemy. He did not favour our republican ideals. I went up to him now.

"I am leaving this afternoon," I said, "by the four o'clock train for Tientsin. I shall spend several days there before sailing for Europe. If anyone asks for me this morning you will please say that I have gone to do some errands. I shall return to the hotel for lunch."

I went back to my room and put on my hat. When I came down again and crossed the vesti-

bule, the boy in grey had disappeared. Evidently he had gone to tell Mr. Chin that I was leaving Peking before the hour appointed for our meeting.

Once outside the hotel, I strolled along as though I were going to do errands about which there was no special hurry. As soon as I had turned the corner of the street, I started to run as fast as I could go toward the railway-station—a distance of two or three hundred yards. I had made my calculations so as to arrive at the very moment when the 9:45 A. M. Tientsin express would be pulling out. Just as the train started, I sprang onto the platform.

Three hours later I was in Tientsin; and two hours after my arrival I had sailed on an English ship for Shanghai.

There I had many comrades. When I landed and found myself among them, they treated me like one who has been resuscitated. The attack which, for a moment, I had expected to make upon the Minister of Finance, had proved unsuccessful. My bombs had not done their work. The Minister had escaped, but the dear friends who had replaced me had fallen into the hands of the enemy and been put to death.

As for myself, the newspapers had announced my demise. My sudden disappearance from the hotel, where I had left my valise, my pretty evening-dress, and my other belongings, seemed to

indicate some tragedy. The police, when questioned, had replied that I had been arrested and shot.

It is easy to imagine my feelings. It seemed to me that, at the most critical hour, I was forsaking our cause.

My brother came from Canton to Shanghai. He told me that Mr. Lee had written to ask for help in France, and that Mr. Woo, one of the Nanking deputies, and several other ardent republicans, were about to sail, and that they begged me to accompany them on this pilgrimage for the land of Western science.

CHAPTER XLV

Back in Our Canton Palace

AT HONG KONG I found my family, who had all come to meet me, with the exception of my grandmother. She had been too overwhelmed with the news of my death to make this short journey. She had wept, so they told me, and torn her hair; she had burnt incense before my picture and sworn by heaven and earth that she would avenge me. As for my mother, my sister, and my brothers, they looked upon me as I got off the boat like a dead person who has come to life. No one spoke for a long time. It was my mother, finally, who began to talk to me and to reason with me. She did not blame me; she merely explained very wisely that politics cannot be good when they result only in opposing one life to another. No doubt, the Peking Government was still detestable, but at least, thanks to the efforts of our party, and in spite of all difficulties, the republic had been established. It was time now to be patient, to watch and wait. She concluded:

"You must realize, Soumay dear, that you are not twenty. There are many long years before

you during which you shall be able to serve your country, and you can do this more successfully if you have first finished your studies in Europe. There is nothing more you can do here at the present moment. Your enemies seek to kill you, and they will succeed. It is beautiful to sacrifice one's life, but it must be for a cause, and not in vain. Just now the useless risks you take for yourself are a danger to us all."

What impressed me the most in all she said was that, because of my ignorance, I could not really be of use to my country.

I had imagined that the shock my grandmother had received concerning my demise would make her less exacting, more indifferent to etiquette. Such was not the case, however. She received me in her own apartment, seated in a large armchair which had all the appearance of a throne. I was obliged to *kowtow,* which means that I had to prostrate myself, touching the ground three times with my forehead. After this concession to form, she lifted me up and clasped me to her heart, and there were tears in her eyes—and in mine, too, as I noticed that she could no longer walk without leaning upon a cane.

Another source of melancholy for me was the state in which I found the old house grandfather had built. We had abandoned it during all the years of our sojourn in Peking. In the outer court the moss had grown up between the stones,

and it muffled the sound of our feet as though we had been ghosts returning. One aged gardener now did the work alone which formerly had occupied a score of men. The house itself was deserted. The women's quarters, which for years had been animated by the children with their gay-coloured clothes, by the gentle comings and goings of our young mothers, our games, our songs, was now silent and empty. In the main house, where the men of the family had grown up, an old uncle now lived alone.

The sight of this dilapidation made me appreciate for the first time at its true value the magnificence of our home. At Hong Kong, at Shanghai, at Peking, I had known beautiful things which could serve as a term of comparison. I was justly proud of what I saw. I said to myself, "All I contemplate here is a symbol of the condition of China itself. Those who do not know our country believe that it is decrepit. They do not realise that our soul is intact."

Our house had suffered from neglect. To restore the charm of flowering gardens, the brightness of repainted walls, regilded woodwork, it was only necessary to call in a few workmen. I determined to do this at once, longing to add a few evidences of modern progress to all this charm of past tradition.

The women, I decided, were no longer to live in the pavilion where they had formerly been se-

cluded; they were to move into the large house, which was more comfortable, and which could be more readily adapted to modern existence. For my personal use I confiscated my grandfather's lovely apartment. Using the Chinese teakwood frame of his bed, I replaced the somewhat hard boards and cushions on which he had slept by European springs and mattress. I persuaded several of my cousins to abandon the quarters where their mothers had lived, and to share with me my new kingdom. My old uncle looked upon this invasion with no little astonishment, but he resigned himself without really opposing me.

When all the house had been done over according to my ideas, we gave a banquet. Everybody was invited—the rich people of the town and the poor of the district. Families who for years had not met each other accepted our hospitality, which recalled the brilliancy of former days. As for the poor of Canton, who had been sadly neglected since my grandfather's death, they were overjoyed.

"The great Tcheng Yao has returned!" they cried. "His granddaughter brings him back to us!"

Thus our house began to revive its old gaiety, to hum with the murmur of life.

Relatives whom we had not seen for years came from great distances to greet our return. They travelled in veritable caravans, bringing with

them rare products from their provinces, fruits, cakes, smoked fish, and rare gifts. The servants who accompanied them had been chosen each one because of some particular ability. One because he was an artist in cooking, another for his talent as a silk weaver, a third because of her skill as an embroiderer...

I accepted with pleasure the invitation from one of my aunts. She wanted to show me her estate. We set out in a procession of eight sedan-chairs upon a journey which lasted for several days. A coolie was appointed to serve as my guide. His mission was to walk by the side of my chair and point out to me all the beauties of the country through which we passed.

My aunt's place was on the seashore. Her house, entirely built of bamboo, faced the ocean. She received us in wonderful style. She gave receptions and private theatricals, and she allowed us for these occasions to dress up in the magnificent old costumes of which she had a rare collection.

We went sailing; we tasted oysters for the first time, and fish unknown. Thus I passed eight days of peace and joy, during which the very thought of politics had gone out of my mind. I wondered, indeed, if it were possible that I had ever given my life so intensely to what now seemed only a dream.

CHAPTER XLVI

Westward—Ho!

SHORTLY after returning to the dear old home in Canton, I received a visit one day from one of the most radical deputies, Mr. Woo. He insisted very earnestly on his desire, and that of our revolutionary friends, that I should embark for France without further delay. Two other comrades, Mr. Wei and Mr. Tchang, also came to tell me that they were about to leave, and hoped that they might serve as my escort.

My family felt distressed at the thought of this parting which was to separate us for an indefinite period, yet they were even more eager than I for this solution to the difficulties with which my life seemed now beset. They all came with me as far as Hong Kong, where I was to take the steamer which touched on its way from Shanghai to Europe. The ship was to remain overnight and until the following day at noon in the port. I wanted to embark at once, but my mother begged me to spend our last evening and morning together at the house of one of my aunts in Hong Kong, so I contented myself with sending my dear

Tung Ur to put all my baggage in my cabin. I felt that this made my departure irrevocable.

My mother longed to have me take our faithful Tung Ur with me. She had every confidence in the devotion of the comrades who were to be my travelling companions, but she suffered to feel that I was going off alone with no member of our family, not even a servant at my side. My brother, who understood the situation, talked to her very seriously. He explained that at the other end of the world, where I was going to take up my new existence, I must lead the life of a student without servants, without any of the ease and luxury of my home-life; that I must be hidden away in a corner with only my books and my work to protect me and keep me company.

The Chinese, I know, have the reputation of not possessing a very exact idea of time. Certainly our family succumbed to the national failing on the day I was to embark. We lingered so long in our farewells, in our final recommendations and good wishes, that at last when we arrived at the wharf the steamer on which all my baggage had been placed the night before appeared like a mere speck of charcoal on the distant horizon.

My family, delightfully inconsistent, were quite rejoiced over this catastrophe, which they declared presented some heavenly omen; but I could see no good in this delay of five days, during which

I fretted greatly, as I was obliged to wait for the next boat.

My embarrassment in regard to my belongings was relieved by a cablegram sent by the comrades who had sailed without me. They announced with charming good-humour that they would wait for me at Singapore. My brother very kindly accompanied me as far as that port. As an envoy of the family, he wished to bid me the final farewell, as I set out to take up my new life.

CHAPTER XLVII

Where Is Progress?

WE LANDED at Marseilles after an uneventful voyage and my impressions were those of a dreamer awakening to find the visions of his sleep have become a reality. Indeed, the many pictures I had seen of France had given me a just notion of that incomparable country. I was surprised only at the ancient aspect of the buildings in Paris.

As for the moral impressions, I was deeply moved by the thought of all that France represents. I recalled details of her heroic struggle for justice in the past. This land was the very cradle of republican ideas—liberty, equality, fraternity—for which so many Frenchmen had given their lives.

In April, 1914, I settled in one of the Paris *pensions,* or boarding houses, indicated by our loyal friend Mr. Lee Yu Ying. In spite of the absorbing effort to learn French, of which I did not know one word, I was very lonely and sad. It was impossible to inspire any real sympathy in people with whom I could not converse, and who,

I felt, considered me rather as a savage than an equal.

At the end of three months I was able to make myself somewhat understood and to go about alone.

Rumors then began to reach us. Many of my fellow-students came to see me to discuss politics. Those who had been longer in Europe than I, foresaw a great war. Every day, as we neared the end of July, the news grew more and more alarming. On August 1st, the call "To Arms!" rang out through France.

As soon as the order of mobilisation had been posted up, I went over to the Eastern Railway station to watch the troops leaving. A great silence seemed to have swept over the city. People were too sorrow-stricken to speak. They clung to each other. I remember one father who was parting with his boy. His black clothes told the story of what this meant to him. His head was bowed. His hand covered his eyes. As the train pulled out, he looked up and tried to smile....

There were thousands of troops piling into the trains, thousands waiting in the station, thousands more moving in a steady stream through the neighbouring streets. Each soldier in uniform seemed to know his place and what he had to do and where he had to go. Each wore on his face the expression of dumb heroism.

When I reached home, it was night. For three hours I sat unable to move. I had come to seek civilisation and scientific progress, to study a form of life more agreeable and more useful than what I had known. I had escaped the violence of a revolution only to be plunged into the tragedy of an international war.

As the days passed the news became more and more alarming. Finally, early in September, a general exodus began. The entire well-to-do population of Paris, advised by the authorities, was fleeing before the enemy. The Government was leaving for Bordeaux, the Embassies were being evacuated. An opportunity was offered me to accompany the members of the Chinese Legation. The moment was a painful one, but I had begun to understand the situation better. I determined that, whatever might happen, I would remain in Paris.

This decision was only confirmed when my sister and her husband passed through Paris on their way back to Canton in December. They begged me to leave with them. I explained that I had made a great sacrifice to come to France. This war and the present events I considered not only important, but a turning point in the history of the world. I must see the result. So I parted with my sister and my brother-in-law, remaining alone to continue my studies.

By the Autumn of 1915, I had progressed suf-

ficiently in my lessons to enter the Law School of the Paris University, the Sorbonne. In June, 1916, I passed my first examinations in Law. Though I was sure that I could succeed, I trembled when my turn came to be questioned. A good memory such as all Chinese possess was my precious ally. Above all I was sustained and inspired by the longing to show the women of my country what they could do if they made the effort I had. I was the first Chinese girl who had ever presented herself at an examination in this historic university. In my eagerness to tell all I knew I became so voluble that my examining professor finally cried out to me:

"Enough, enough! Sit down, please. You have already passed with double honours!"

CHAPTER XLVIII

Shipwrecks, Fires....

THE conflict of political opinions at home continued to complicate interior politics and to influence China's attitude toward the outside world. We alternated between futile attempts at a reaction toward imperial tendencies and outbursts of loyalty to our ancient traditions. Thus while the patriots urged the Government to take their place beside the Allies, in June, 1917, the Imperialist party succeeded in placing the Boy-Emperor on the throne. This restoration lasted for the brief space of twelve days only.

China, deeply stirred by the final decision of the United States to take her stand on the battle-fields where freedom was fighting oppression, had broken off diplomatic relations with Germany in March, 1917. In July, at a mass meeting held in Paris, under the patronage of the Chinese Minister, Mr. Hoo Wei Teh, to express our sympathy with the Allies, I was present as the students' delegate and I spoke in French before an assembly of two thousand people.

Our recompense came in August with the news that China had declared war against the Imperial

German Government. The students in Paris appointed me to return to Peking and urge that some tangible expression of our goodwill be made, to affirm our allegiance with the Allies, that some act of utility follow up the mere words of our declaration.

The journey home was fraught with difficulties. Our sailing, fixed for November 27 from Marseilles, was delayed until December 20th, owing to the extreme activity of the German and Austrian submarines in the Mediterranean. Nor was such caution unjustified. When at last we ventured forth one of the ships of our convoy was torpedoed. After a cruise of almost three weeks we accomplished the short crossing—a three days' sail—from Marseilles to Port Said. But we had no sooner landed than a summons came to return to our ship, as the Breslau and the Goeben, the last two German warships at large, had been signalled and were expected to bombard Port Said.

During the further delay of a month which this false alarm necessitated, our hotel was shaken to its foundations one night by a mysterious and terrible explosion in the harbor. Ill luck seemed to pursue us. Shortly before reaching Singapore, our ship struck a rock and slowly sank, which caused much emotion but no loss further than that of our cargo and baggage.

Meanwhile, this voyage which was to have

lasted six weeks, had dragged on for over four months. My grandmother in Canton had fallen ill with anxiety. My mother and the various younger members of the family had come to Hong Kong to await my arrival. It was spring now and the opening of the races was fixed for the day on which my ship was due to land its passengers. Two of my aunts who, not without reason, had become sceptical about the date of my reaching home, urged my mother to accompany them to this brilliant gathering at the race course, one of the great social events of China. Her longing to see me and her prolonged anxiety prevented my mother from accepting this invitation and thereby saved her life. That day both of my aunts perished in the terrible accident caused by the overturning of an alcohol lamp in the restaurant of the grand stand and which resulted in the burning of two thousand people. My fate seemed tragic indeed: revolutions, wars, submarine attacks, explosions, shipwrecks, fires...

I was now to endure my first sorrow. During the short hour which transpired in our journey from Hong Kong to Canton, my grandmother, worn out, had passed on to the world beyond. Feeling that her end was near, she had dressed herself with extreme care, she had prayed for a time and then, lying down upon her bed, she had closed her eyes for ever.

The shock of finding she had died before I

could reach her and embrace her again was all the more terrible for me in that my aunts and cousins and my dear godmother, "Miss Angel," held me in a great measure responsible for this tragedy. My independence and my violence had caused my grandmother too many hours of anguish...

In China when any well-to-do person dies it is the custom to embalm the body and keep it in the house for forty days. During this time twenty priests are in attendance. Every two hours, night and day, they walk for half an hour around the deceased, singing, intoning prayers to drive away the evil spirits and to protect the soul which is supposed to hover for a time between earth and heaven. I must, it was decided, make amends in this way to grandmother's soul.

So, for forty nights, dressed in the white linen mourning garments of the Chinese, beating a small drum, droning a chant, I turned in a circle around the remains of my proud ancestor.

Out of deference to the traditions which she had revered and which she had suffered to feel that I did not sufficiently respect, I asked my father to especially honour her memory. This was done by preparing a series of funereal offerings, made out of bamboo fibre and rice paper. They represented a house completely furnished, a retinue of almost life-size servants, dresses for every occasion, carriages, horses, sedan chairs, gardens of flowers, fruits, food of all sorts,

money, books, jewels of jade and gold and pearls, everything which could be imagined a woman might need during her lifetime. The cleverness with which these beautiful objects were prepared made it impossible to believe that they were not lasting works of art. Yet they were all burned. Slowly, hour after hour, for an entire day, a procession advanced bearing these treasures which, one by one, were laid upon the fire lighted by grandmother's grave.

At the end of this period of official mourning I fell ill with a fever. The contrast between the enlightened modern world in which I had been living and these strangely superstitious customs had proved overwhelming.

CHAPTER XLIX

Two Million Women Back of Me

IT was late in the summer before I could travel as far as Peking. In November the Armistice was signed. Our delegates to the Peace Conference were the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Lou Tsien Tsiang, beloved by all who have had the privilege of working with him and of following his consistent effort for the maintenance of cordial relations between the East and the West, Mr. Wellington Koo, the most able of the young Chinese diplomats, well known in America, first as a graduate of Columbia where he took the intercollegiate prize for debating, then as Minister to Washington, where he occupied the Legation for several years. The third delegate was Mr. C. T. Wang, one of the briliant young Chinamen who were active in establishing a Republic. In 1911 he was Secretary in the first cabinet at Nanking, in 1926 he was named Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Toward the spring of 1919, I was sent as a delegate from the south to attend the women's group at the Peace Conference and as a repre-

sentative of the Chinese press, to obtain and distribute information.

My own adventure during these historic hours is insignificant. I spoke a number of times before small assemblies of French lawyers and politicians. I helped to organize a public meeting to protest against the decision regarding Shantung. I collaborated heart and soul with my compatriots in a persevering and determined effort to manifest the will of young China that its Commissioners should not sign the Treaty of Versailles.

Early in July I set out with a group of international journalists to visit Belgium and Italy. Our journey northward lay across the battlefields of France and of Flanders. As I gazed at the thousands of crosses which marked the soldiers' graves I remembered that long afternoon in August, 1914, when I had watched the troops leaving Paris. These were the men who had gone forth to fight for the freedom of the world and who now lay sleeping forever after making the supreme sacrifice of their lives for an ideal.

In Brussels I spoke before a throng of people assembled to welcome our group. It was an infinite consolation to feel that as I talked a great bond of sympathy seemed to draw China nearer than she had been to these hearts of the West.

In Rome my experience was the same. I realised that China seemed to most Europeans as far away as Mars,—a land of old brocades and

of crumbling temples,—inhabited by a people who eat cats and mice and swallow's nests.

I was only one Chinese woman, alone to speak, but two million others had sent me word from home that they were standing back of me. So my mission did not seem useless. To those with whom I talked and whom I addressed in Italy, China, her aspirations, her struggle, presented perhaps for the first time a human interest.

Every day more keenly I realised the necessity of encouraging my fellow sisters to leave their towns and villages and to come to Western capitals for learning. I longed for the Chinese women to understand that there must be compatriots not only among individuals, but among nations, so that wars declared to satisfy the ambition of a minority shall no longer be possible.

In October, 1919, I returned to China. For a year I travelled through the provinces urging parents to encourage their daughters and to make it possible for them to continue their studies in the universities of Western Science.

In December, 1920, I was able to set sail again. I gathered about me a flock of twenty girls and brought this adopted family with me to France. Twice as many more young Chinese women students had preceded us. Graduates of the normal schools in China, some of them had been teachers in the primary schools, all were determined to

stay in France until they had mastered the branches of knowledge—letters, art, law, agriculture, industry—which would fit them to become professors on their return to their own country.

Finally in June, 1925, I received my degree of Doctor of Law at the University of Paris, the first Chinese or indeed Oriental woman upon whom this recompense had been conferred.

CHAPTER L

Conclusion

BEFORE I close this story of my childhood and girlhood I want to relate the impression made upon me by my all too short visit to America.

In the autumn of 1919, on my last journey home, I passed through the United States. I had no sooner set foot in New York than my heart seemed to unfold to new hopes. Though I had never been in that country before and knew no one, I was in a land of friends and I felt it. The contact, even superficial, with this great people was uplifting. Their love of right and justice make them think not only of their own country, but of humanity at large. I understood at once, by the articles in the newspapers, that they had grasped with a quick sympathy our situation. This touched and consoled me. I felt morally at home.

And what shall I say of my amazement at all that I saw? The high buildings—those cathedrals of industry—the elevated roads overhead, the Hudson tubes under the rivers and the superb bridges which span their waters, the homes, the

shops, the parks...I was dazed and enchanted. Everywhere I turned I met the same activity, everyone was busy, everyone was in a hurry, everyone was—even to a stranger like me, a girl from China,—everyone was polite. My eyes were burning, my head was swimming. To what a fairyland had I not come.

That first night in New York, as I looked from the hotel window over the amazing brilliance of Broadway, with its beautiful flashing lights—the lights of industry—I thought over all I had seen during that memorable day. This was progress. I had found it at last.

As I crossed from one coast to the other, my amazement increased. All that I saw and could understand in this brief glimpse I respected and esteemed. Nor do I want to close without making an appeal. We count on America to help us. You, the scientific men, the intellectual force of our great sister Republic, we turn to you. You have risen above frontiers, you have mastered the jealousies which separate men. You will show us how to work and how to conquer. Not to conquer land which does not belong to us, but how to conquer ideas, scientific discoveries which may be given to all. Your fine spirit uplifts all those whose aim is high.

We call upon you, the mainspring of American activities, the business men. You have proved to the world a rare fact: that a man who makes mil-

lions may be an idealist. You have demonstrated the value of money when spent in the service of others. You great financiers and manufacturers, help us to develop China! Show us how to earn money and how to spend it, as you have done, for the lasting good of humanity.

We look to you American women as our example. Your encouragement will shine like a light to show us the way. We want to become like you, not only free women, but citizens of the world,—of the New World.

And now one last word as to the present situation in China and the points one must keep in mind to understand its seeming confusion.

Everywhere people are asking the question: "What is happening in China?" And the answer that comes most frequently is: "Bolshevism." Yet the Communistic movement, which at present attempts to ally itself with the elements of discord in all countries, cannot in any way explain, nor is it in the slightest measure responsible for the events now taking place in China. They are of a purely national inspiration.

The Chinese are an essentially agricultural people, a people of farmers who own small tracts of land. Not only are there no great rural proprietors, but the general wealth is more than elsewhere equally divided. So, as the land is at the origin of all great fortunes, there are no capital-

ists, properly speaking, and, as the industries are not yet developed along modern lines, the typical "large company" does not exist and the problem of capital and labor cannot here present even an opening for the wedge of Bolshevism. Taxation is light, the people are content with the republican form of government, but they are, and for ten years have been, agitated by a grievance which must be assuaged if the world wishes peace to be maintained in the Far East.

The cause of this ferment lies in the determination of modern China to obtain the complete revision of the antiquated treaties which over fifty years ago determined her relations with the international Powers. As things now stand China, a young republic, is bound by treaties concluded during the reign of the imperialistic Manchus, demanding an attitude toward all foreigners which makes of them a body of international aristocrats, enjoying privileges which they have not earned and avoiding responsibilities which are not made incumbent upon them.

It was with the hope of seeing these antiquated Manchu treaties revised that China came into the Great War. The call to arms for her meant a final combat with imperialism and militarism; it meant the triumph of true democracy and of the self-determination of peoples.

When, in 1919, the Powers gathered around

the Table of Peace, China presented her hopes. The main points she claimed were a revision of the treaties, tariff autonomy, and the establishment of the principle of extra-territoriality.

None of her demands were granted, but, in order to satisfy the Powers, it was deemed necessary that she could relinquish her economic control of Shantung.

And what is Shantung?

It is not only one of the most prosperous and easily accessible provinces of China, but it is the Holy Land of the people, the sacred birth place of Confucius.

The obviously unjust reply to the legitimate pretentions of China resulted in her delegates refusing to sign the Peace Treaty, on June 28, 1919, at Versailles.

When, in 1921, a conference was called at Washington, Chinese hopes rose again, and again the people, the armies, the government, the workmen and the unnamed students, united in popular demonstrations to vouch that they would sustain their delegates in every effort to obtain justice. The result was a moderate, short-lived satisfaction—a promise that, within a few months after the ratification of the treaty drawn up at Washington, an international commission would be appointed to study the Chinese problem of extra-territoriality. This all occurred almost four years

ago and it was in 1926 only that in the French Chamber of Deputies the project was for the first time voted for the ratification of the Washington Treaty.

So the abuses of justice have continued and so the resentment of the people has grown. It needs no Bolshevism to enforce it. Indeed the recent killing of a few workmen in Shanghai is looked upon by Chinese statesmen as a mere incident which might in itself have been arranged without difficulty.

What cannot be longer tolerated is the non-revision of the treaties. Their one-sided interpretation and the elasticity in their manner of application have given place to such abuses as these among many: the foreigners living in the concessions at Shanghai have prolonged the roads far beyond the limits fixed legally and they have assumed jurisdiction over these roads and all the adjacent lands. Again the mixed court at Shanghai which, according to the terms of the treaty is a Chinese court, presided over by a Chinese judge, administering Chinese law and assisted by foreign assessors if foreigners are involved, since 1912, when the Republic was established, has been practically turned into a foreign court without treaty sanction. To the many demands of the Chinese Government for resumption of the former status, the only answer given has been in requests for

further concessions of land. Again, the purchase by missionairies of property in the interior of China is regulated by a clause inserted into the foreign text which does not appear in the Chinese version. Foreigners are exempt from taxation by the Chinese Government, resulting from a misinterpretation of the principles of extra-territoriality, etc.

Only those ignorant of their rights would continue to accept such conditions, which, because of the radical change of régime alone, if for no other reason, should be considered as having expired.

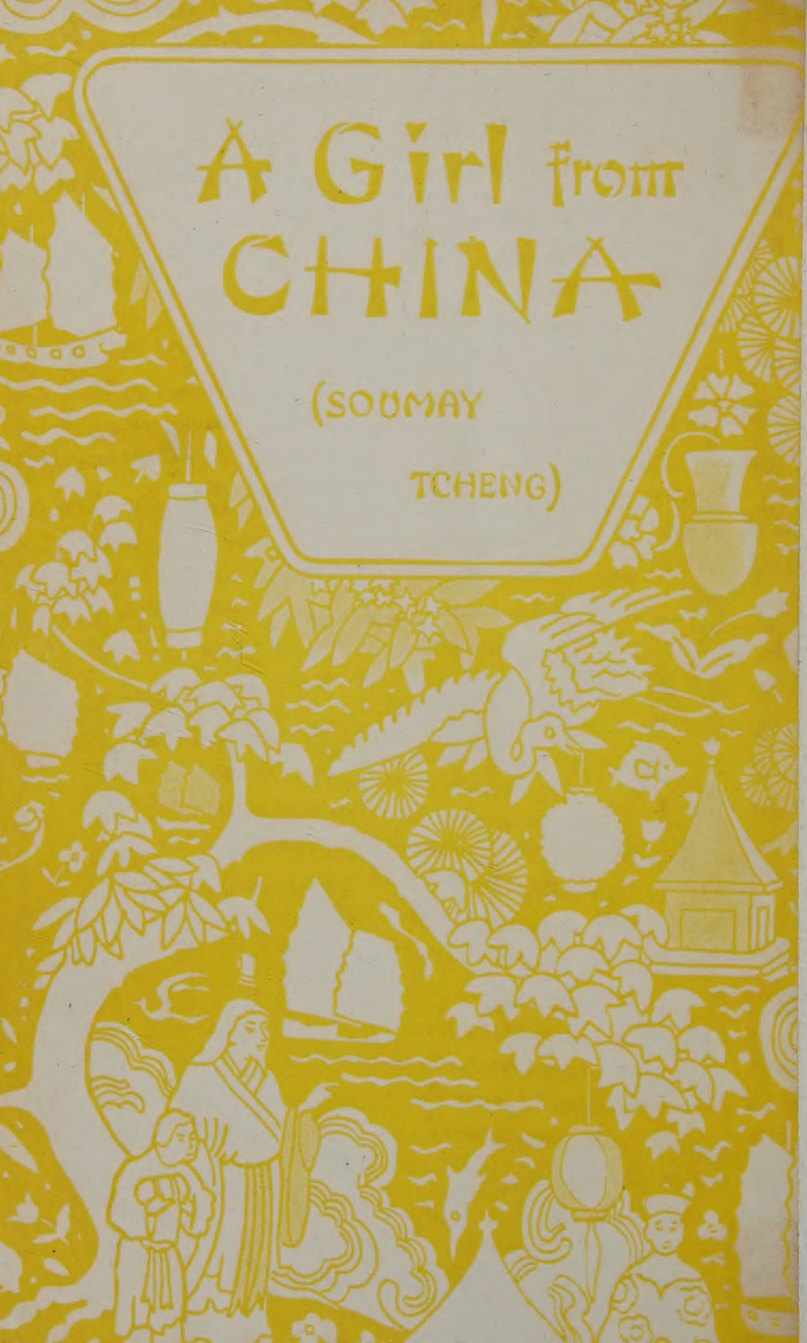
But the Chinese are now alive to their rights. In the last ten years they have studied national questions, they have, through their passionate love of their country, fanned into flame their patriotic ardor. The people now have a voice in national affairs and they are determined—four hundred millions of them (just as they were resolved to overthrow the régime that oppressed them) to modify the deplorable policy forced upon them in their international relations. Their intention is to see the treaties revised, not to the detriment of the foreigner, but with the intention of placing him on an equality with the Chinese. Their hope is to find him working in collaboration with the Chinese for the common good of China, sharing her responsibilities, and understanding her aims and ideals.

Indeed, the sooner the Powers grasp and appreciate the New Spirit which animates China, the better it will be for the fate of the foreigners here resident, and for the peace of the world.

THE END

A Girl from CHINA

(SOUMAY TCHENG)



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A Girl from CHINA

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